TILL THE SOIL AND FILL THE SOUL: INDIGENOUS RESURGENCE AND EVERYDAY PRACTICES OF FARMING IN OKINAWA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

POLITICAL SCIENCE

August 2018

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Keywords: Indigeneity, resurgence, land, agency, farming, Okinawa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without many years of help, support, knowledge, and encouragement from many individuals. I have been very fortunate to have the backing of friends, family, and colleagues who assisted me and gave me confidence in the preparation and completion of this project. I first would like to thank members of my dissertation committee who read numerous drafts of my work and offered incisive, and constructive feedback: Dr. Noenoe K. Silva, Dr. Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Dr. Hokulani K. Aikau, Dr. Mary G. McDonald, and Dr. Lonny E. Carlile. Mahalo nui loa e Kumu Noenoe, my long-time advisor. I have been nurtured and encouraged by your mentorship, advice, and generosity through the ups and downs of my graduate school life. I would also like to thank the other professors and my cohort in the Political Science Department at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa for welcoming me into an inspiring, uplifting, hard-working community. I am proud to be an alumna of the Indigenous Politics Program.

Thank you so much for super supportive friends and faculty at the Center for Okinawan Studies, the Center for Japanese Studies, and the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, the East-West Center in Hawaiʻi, the International Institute for Okinawan Studies at the University of the Ryukyus, Japan. Financial, institutional, and academic backing allowed me to complete my research successfully. I have benefited so much from the community of scholars, mentors, and comrades.

Beyond the institutions which shaped my education, I am thankful for scholars who are committed to the development of welcoming intellectual communities, where my work was nurtured. I would like to thank scholars and colleagues who inspired me, shared their thoughts with me and were willing to read my work, and guide me in this academic journey: Dr. Jeff Corntassel (University of Victoria, Canada), Dr. Taiaiake Alfred (University of Victoria, Canada), Dr. Michael Hathaway (Simon Fraser University, Canada), Dr. Laurel Mei-Singh (University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa), Dr. Juliet Nebolon (Harvard University), Dr. Sasha Davis (Keene State College), Kyle Kajihiro (University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa), Ryan Buyco (Cornell University), Aiko Yamashiro (University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa), Sayaka Sakuma (University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa), Dr. Ikue Kina (University of the Ryukyus), and Dr. Joyce Chinen (University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa). In addition, I would also like to acknowledge friends and

comrades from the Hawai‘i-Okinawa Alliance, Oceania Rising, and Women’s Voices Women Speak for the ongoing solidarity building among our island’s members.

Writing this dissertation benefitted from conversations and intellectual inputs from participants at the Summer Institute on Contested Global Landscapes at Cornell University in 2015 led by Dr. Ray Craib, Dr. Charles Geisler, and Dr. Paul Nadasdy, and the Penn State Asian Studies Summer Institute on Trans-Asian Indigeneity in 2017 led by Dr. Pasang Yangjee Sherpa (University of Washington), Dr. Neal B. Keating (College of Brockpoint, State University of New York), and Dr. Charlotte Eubanks (Penn State University). Special thanks to Dr. Susan J. Wurtzburg, Sandy Dog Books LLC for a copyediting.

In addition, and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the participants in my research who were willing to share their knowledge, perspectives, and feelings. Special thanks to the people in Yomitan and Dr. Kōhei Nakata, who provided essential advice, support, and local insights when I was researching Yomitan. *Ippe nife deebitan*. I extend thanks to my *senpai*, Rinda Yamashiro Kayatani, Kozue Uehara, Chihiro Komine Sakihara, Yukari Akamine, Shinako Oyakawa, Ushii Chinin, who inspired me at the start of grad school, and always reminded me of the importance of being reflexive when researching Okinawa as *Uchinaa Unai*. I am also thankful for my long-standing friends from Okinawa who welcomed me so warmly and cherished me during my return home after more than a decade’s absence. I feel very privileged to have encountered passionate souls of *Uchinaanchu* resurgents.

My friends from Hale Manoa and Hale Kuahine gave me an incredible circle of kindred spirits. As we have shared morning coffees, dinners, laughs, pains, and gossip, we have built amazing friendships connecting our different cultures, beliefs, and passions from around the world. By sharing the same space, time, and food, I have learned and lived the reality of community building. This experience and these friendships are invaluable. There are many other friends in Hawai‘i and around the world who were not directly involved in this project but supported and encouraged me through my research years. It was surely your presence, your words, your hugs, your tears, and your frustrations which I encountered in my mundane days that pushed me forward whenever I stumbled and got lost along the way.

Last but certainly not the least, my deepest gratitude goes to my family for their unconditional love and support. Despite having no idea about “doing grad school in Hawai‘i,” all of my family members supported my decision to pursue this path. I thank my parents,

grandparents, uncles and aunties, and our ancestors for my source of wisdom. I thank my siblings, siblings-in-law, and cousins for being there to back me up, always showing me "real-life situations," and giving me the most beautiful nieces and nephews who are the lights on my path.

There are so many people whom I would like to thank, and I can only name a few here. I offer my regards to all of those who supported me in any respect during this project and my time in graduate school. As I reach a milestone in my life with the completion of this project, please know that you are much appreciated. I thank you, arigato, ippe nife debiru, and mahalo!

ABSTRACT

This dissertation, "Till the Soil and Fill the Soul: Indigenous Resurgence and Everyday Practices of Farming in Okinawa," examines Okinawan Indigeneity through analyses of *Uchinaanchu*'s various actions and reconceptualizations of land. I examine everyday acts of Okinawans making Indigenous space and making the land a more livable place, despite having long been dominated and militarily occupied. More specifically, this dissertation pays attention to and explores the correlation between land-based practices of farming and (a)political activism in the community.

I argue that the everyday act of farming, while perhaps seemingly apolitical and personal, has been and becomes a form of sociopolitical action that not only acts to resist settler-colonial space but also to sustain firmly and to call forth resurgent Okinawan Indigeneity from the ground. In chapters that focus specifically on land use, Indigenous languages, tacit farming, commercial farming, and landscape restoration, I argue that these constitute specific instances and an overall movement of Indigenous resurgence in Okinawa.

The methodology comprises ethnographic research in Okinawa, including participant observations, and formal and semi-formal interviews, and data collection from archival materials. Recognizing the everyday agency of Okinawan villagers in sculpting their own self-determination, I highlight stories of people engaged in active Indigenous resurgence, whom I have termed "resurgents." These resurgents do not necessarily identify themselves as Indigenous rights activists to resist setter-colonial and settler-military structures; however, stories shared by these resurgents show they are doing more than resisting settler domination. They are (re)emerging from rooted Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. Overall, this dissertation demonstrates how narratives and practices of Indigenous resurgents in Okinawa create and envision more sustainable and inclusive space from various directions while remaining firmly rooted in ancestral land. My transdisciplinary and trans-Indigenous approach to land politics in Okinawa contribute to more fully understanding the concept of Indigeneity and its usage.

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INTRODUCTION

One question broke the long silence after our panel presentation. A man in the audience asked, "So are you suggesting to go back to the old-time Okinawa?" This person presumably was reacting to the term "Indigeneity"[1] in our work, which in his mind meant "nativity," "primitiveness," and "unchanging from time immemorial."

This event occurred in March 2012, when I presented a paper on Okinawan self-determination, and applied an analytical frame from Indigenous studies and theories to Okinawa. It was my first presentation at a Japanese academic meeting in Tokyo. This was an international symposium that Waseda University hosted commemorating the 40th anniversary of Okinawa's reversion to Japan. The symposium was titled, "Remembering 40 Years Since Reversion: Okinawan Studies Until Now, Okinawan Studies From Now On." Four other presenters and I organized a panel and presented on the theme of "*Wattaa 'Okinawa kenkyū' no jirenma: Ima wo ikiru Uchinaa unai no shiten kara* (O/J: "The Dilemma of Our 'Okinawan Studies': From the Point of View of Okinawan Women Today)."[2] The panelists included five Okinawan women, who were born after Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972. Another commonality among us was that we all have studied in Hawai'i and were inspired by the cultural renaissance, Indigenous activism, and the scholarship of Native Hawaiians. Our panel discussed difficulties and

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[1] I have chosen to capitalize the words, "Indigenous," and "Indigeneity" following practices of global Indigenous communities and scholars in Indigenous studies. As I discuss and argue different nuances in the use of these terms in particular geographical, historical, and political contexts, I treat the terms as proper nouns to recognize that they are politically-complex categories of identity that people take up (or not) in specific contexts.

[2] Unless otherwise indicated translations are those of the author. When Okinawan and Japanese language terms are listed first in the original language, an English translation follows in parenthesis. *O* indicates the Okinawan language origin was used and *J* indicates a Japanese language origin. *O/J* indicates the mixed use of Okinawan and Japanese. When English translations are listed first, the original Japanese term appears in romanization and with Japanese characters follow in parentheses. For Okinawan terms, Japanese characters may be omitted. Romanization of the Japanese language is adopted from the *ALA-LC Romanization Tables* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 1997). Romanization of Okinawan is from the transcription in Mitsugu Sakihara's *Okinawa-English Wordbook* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006). I would also like to acknowledge my mother Chibana Takako, who is bilingual in Okinawan and Japanese, for closely proofreading my transcription and translation of the Okinawan language.

confusions that each of us, as "Okinawan," "woman," and "researcher," have felt and experienced throughout our years of researching and studying Okinawa in Japan and Hawai'i. With backgrounds in several disciplinary and analytical approaches such as positionalities, feminism, Indigeneity, decolonizing pedagogies, and language revitalization, each presenter raised critical questions on "researching Okinawa."

Luckily or unluckily, our panel presentation was scheduled for the first slot of the three-day symposium. While this international symposium allowed panelists to present in Japanese and English, our panel decided to use Japanese, English AND our natural way of speaking, *Uchinaa Yamatoguchi* (O: Okinawan Japanese). As I look back, I think that this was a bold act for graduate students and junior scholars. It challenged the underlying question of whether "Okinawan Studies Until Now" has encouraged the self-determination of Okinawa, and it issued this challenge in front of a full, seated audience, largely Japanese, male, and senior academics. Reactions from the audience were unexpectedly weak. After a long uncomfortable pause, one person in the front of the room asked me the question about Indigeneity. While feeling very nervous, I tried articulating my best answer to his question. I explained that using an Indigenous framework does not mean that I wished for Okinawa to go back to the old days when people thought of us as backward, poor, and uncivilized. We, Okinawans, must decide what it means to be Indigenous. Applying an Indigenous theoretical framework helps us to develop a better understanding of Okinawan experiences of settler colonialism and militarism, our politics, positionalities, and responsibilities in the future through Okinawan studies. I could not figure out how the audience received our presentation, or my answer. Despite the limited reaction of the audience, I convinced myself and the other panelists that it was a meaningful step we took together, and that our collective presence and discussions must have contributed something important to the symposium.

This experience and the inquiry into Okinawan Indigeneity has pushed me to ponder the possibilities and limitations of fitting a global discourse of Indigeneity onto Okinawan experiences. There are growing numbers of scholars who work on Okinawa-related topics and support Okinawa's self-determination, just as many non-native scholars elsewhere research political rights and cultural representation of native people. For me, researching Okinawa with an Indigenous theoretical framework was not and has not been synonymous with an anthropological and sociological inquiry into social movements and cultural practices. Noted anthropologist,

James Clifford (2013, 7) argues for "an ethnographic and historical realism," in which he sees Indigeneity as "a process of becoming." Indigeneity for me as an Indigenous scholar, is also a process of becoming and a renewal of what it means. It includes constant reflexive analysis of how Okinawans came to self-identify and articulate Indigeneity while having faced all sorts of dilemmas, having shared solidarity with global Indigenous peoples, and having struggled to self-determine what counts as the voices and knowledge of Okinawa. Therefore, when writing about Indigeneity, I do not intend or pursue arguments on the identification or authenticity of *the* Indigenous Okinawa. While I do identify myself as an Indigenous Okinawan scholar, the perspectives of Indigenous peoples are multiple and elastic similar to those of the dominant cultures.

This dissertation, "Till the Soil and Fill the Soul: Indigenous Resurgence and Everyday Practices of Farming in Okinawa," is an attempt to contemplate Okinawan Indigeneity through analyses of *Uchinaanchu*'s[3] (O: Okinawans') various actions toward and re-conceptualizations of land. Drawing from my long-term fieldwork in Yomitan Village in Okinawa and building upon Jeff Corntassel's (2012) notion of "everyday acts of resurgence," this dissertation documents and analyzes Okinawan everyday acts of creating Indigenous space and making the land a more livable place, despite having long been dominated and militarily occupied. I introduce stories of current and continuous engagement to sustain and vitalize the dynamics of Indigenous world-making.

In *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, Taiaiake Alfred challenges settler-colonialism and proposes the concept of "Indigenous resurgence" to call for Indigenous commitment for action. Alfred advocates forms of resurgence that are grounded in Indigenous people's philosophies and languages in order to respect and reconnect to their native ways of being. He describes this pathway as "spiritual revolution and contention" that "seeks to remake the entire landscape of power and relationship to reflect truly a liberated post-imperial vision" (Alfred 2005, 27). Indigenous philosophies have not been lost or become extinct. It is emerging and RE-emerging political actions among Indigenous peoples that were submerged under settler-

[3] This term is spelled several ways, *Uchinaanchu*, *Uchinanchu*, and *Uchinānchu*. Unless it is in a direct quote or used as a proper noun, I use *Uchinaanchu*, following spelling in Sakihara's *Okinawa-English Wordbook*.

colonial powers. Following Alfred, Jeff Corntassel (2005, 2012) and Leanne Simpson (2008, 2011) further contributed to the theoretical development of "Indigenous resurgence" to present the revival of Indigenous culture, tradition, knowledge, values, and life forms in ways to stress its liveliness and potentials for solidarity building of Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationships. While this dissertation focuses on actions which constitute Indigenous resurgence, I understand that actions require an actor. Throughout the dissertation, I use the term "resurgents" to refer to people who have actively engaged in Indigenous resurgence. In addition, I use resurgents as a way to acknowledge the political agency of the Indigenous people rather than as another tag for identification.

This dissertation pays attention to and explores, not just everyday resistance, but the everyday farming of Okinawans to understand the correlation between land-based practices and (a)political activism in the community. I argue that the everyday act of farming, while it is seemingly apolitical and personal, has been and becomes a form of socio-political action in which not only to resist settler-colonial space but also to sustain firmly and to resurge Okinawan Indigeneity from the ground. This is important work for several reasons, as I will now discuss.

Contributions

My dissertation brings the fields of Okinawan studies, Indigenous studies, and political science into a conversation. This research highlights how Okinawans have cautiously engaged with, taken up, adopted, and translated the discourse of Indigeneity not only to resist military occupation and settler colonial governance of the land, but also to commit and reactivate autochthonous understandings of belonging and communities' connection to the land, cultures, and spiritualities. Rather than rights-based initiatives, Okinawan farmers are committing responsibility-based everyday acts of resurgence, which are redefining the landscape as Indigenous.

This dissertation contributes to moving beyond any state-centered, settler-centered, or scholar-centered discourses of Okinawan Indigeneity. Instead, I propose reconsidering the significance of local agency, political and economic aspirations, and cultural and spiritual understandings of the land. I bring to the forefront voices "from below" that reveal counternarratives of marginalized people (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2012). Furthermore, these counternarratives encourage us to explore the ontological turn that the concept of Indigeneity may provide. When we re-orient ourselves to the place we live and the livelihood provided

directly by the land and listen to stories the language of the place store, we can further explore the possibilities of the world we live in. For example, Indigenous narratives of coexistence that I heard repeatedly in the course of my ethnographic research are a way to shift our understanding of the colonized past from oppression to empowerment. No matter how we are pushed toward the margins, represented as passive victims, or erased as "assimilated" beings, Okinawans have never lost our will for self-determination. Indigenous coexistence is not submission but a strategy to bring Indigenous voices forward while respecting the existence of other narratives. I, therefore, stress Okinawan people's political and cultural agency to make our successful resurgence stories the food for future generations, rather than just another story of resisting the powerful.

What is important and needed for Indigenous youths and future generations is empowering narratives of our ancestors. That is my contribution to re-purposing, indigenizing, taking control of, and balancing stories of our place, community, languages, and people. I have heard and read enough stories that claim how Okinawa/ns have been oppressed, discriminated against, and marginalized. So instead, I write stories that tell how our ancestors exerted their commitments and exercised self-determination. These stories in turn show how the same is true of many of us today.

In this vein, my research considers Okinawan villagers' and farmers' seemingly apolitical everyday practices through which they express, exert, and sustain their political, economic, cultural, and spiritual connection to the land. Okinawans have maintained this connection through small-scale farming of the colonized space. These practices, as people cautiously engaged, refused, adopted, and translated various tools along the way, allowed Okinawans to prepare fertile ground for an Indigenous resurgence. Despite various external pressures and historical experiences of displacement and marginalization, Okinawans have never given up nor relinquished their Indigenous cosmology. Rather, their efforts to sustain, translate, negotiate, and repurpose an autochthonous understanding of Indigeneity reconfigures and regenerates an Indigenous cosmology for the bottom-up strategies needed for the decolonization of Okinawa. In order to understand this process, some discussion of the political geography and scholarly context of the project is needed.

Context

The island that the United States once called "Keystone of the Pacific," Okinawa, is the southernmost and most recently added administrative region of Japan (see fig. 1). Okinawa has gradually gained more international scholarly attention due to increasing media coverage and transnational protests by anti-US military activists in the international arena. Since 1996, activists and activist scholars from Okinawa have been articulating their Indigeneity at the United Nations, including asserting their right to self-determination over the land while contesting a disproportionate American military occupation (AIPR 2004; Chibana 2013; Siddle 2003; Uemura 2003; Yokota 2015). Okinawa Prefecture, only 0.6 percent of the Japanese national territory, has been burdened with approximately 74 percent of the US military forces stationed in Japan (OPG 2016). These forces occupy 18 percent of Okinawa Island, where much of the Okinawan population lives (OPG 2016).

Figure 1. Map of Okinawa. Courtesy of Okinawa Prefecture.

The existing literature on Okinawa in English has three major trends. Early ethnographic works conducted during the US Occupation period (1945-1972) focus on village life, the family system, culture, and religion (e.g. Glacken 1955; Haring 1969; Lebra 1966; McCune 1975). Among these, the Indigenous religion, in particular, has attracted the curiosity of American scholars (Lebra 1966; Sered 1999). A second and persistent scholarly approach to Okinawa revolves around social movements, examining these organizations and participants, and analyzing tensions over (de)militarization of the island (e.g. Hara 2011; Johnson 1999; McCormack and Norimatsu 2012; Tanji 2006, 2011). The third major approach considers the emergence of modern Okinawan subjectivity and identity politics. These studies often link to cultural politics, social movements, and resistance in relation to Japan's "nation-state." This approach explores and reveals "politics" within a distinctive Okinawan culture which is demonstrated in songs, dances, poems, comedy, storytelling, literature and so on (e.g. Gillan 2012; Hein and Selden 2003; Ikeda 2014, 2016; Molasky and Rabson 2000; Nelson 2008; Siddle 1998, 2003).

My dissertation draws from all these fields in order to analyze Okinawa within the logic of settler militarism and a global discourse of Indigeneity. In chapters that focus specifically on land use, Indigenous languages, farming on the military land, commercial farming, and landscape restoration, I argue that these constitute specific instances and an overall movement of Indigenous resurgence in Okinawa. In order to fully understand the Okinawan situation and this argument, some background history is necessary. In the next chapter, I provide a brief history of the land transformation in Okinawa and explain how native Okinawans have lost their control over the land. While Okinawans have lost control of their land in some ways, in other ways, they still connect to the soil, and this is apparent when a perspective focusing on Indigeneity is applied.

Approach: Indigeneity and Okinawan Counterapproach to Settler Militarism

2017 marked the tenth year since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Despite the adoption by a majority of states, this internationally recognized legal concept of "Indigenous peoples" still invites controversy and reactions to its application in Asia. The controversial points include: general differences in political consciousness, various impacts of colonialism, historical oppression and marginalization, the State's recognition or refusal, and forms of articulating

identity and skepticism by Indigenous people themselves (Baird 2015, 2016; Erni 2008; Hathaway 2010; Kingsbury 1998; Luo 2017; Morton, Wang, and Li 2017).

Published before UNDRIP, Benedict Kingsbury's (1998, 422) article on the Asian controversy argued that language to describe the social and political concepts and "political consciousness of the modern territorial state" has made it difficult for people in Asia to apply international legal terms like "Indigenous peoples" to themselves. Pointing out the Eurocentrism, which Kingsbury (1998, 456) describes as the "aggressive global assertion of Western concepts by governments and transnational networks based in the West," his criticism of "Indigenous peoples" as a universal concept encourages dialogues about a more inclusive and flexible definition. The shared understandings of Indigeneity in Asia are that the Indigenous label and movements stand for recognition of cultural difference and opposition to a political and economic appropriation of land and resources. More scholarship on land politics and social movements in Asia has revealed reactions and frictions that the global Indigeneity discourse created for local communities. The mismatch with local ideas include differences in conceptualizing Indigeneity (Keating 2013), "refusal of pregiven political categories" (Tsing 2007, 38), and finding a "tribal slot" (Li 2000) to claim collective rights for the land and natural resources.

A newer approach to Okinawan studies repositions Okinawan experiences in the long history of the island peoples in the Pacific (Davis 2015), or anti-capitalist peasant struggles in the world's periphery (Matsumura 2015). Along these lines, contemporary Okinawan social movements and international activism under an international legal framework of Indigenous rights have been described as a "sense of global community predicated on a history of colonial domination" (Yokota 2015, 70; see also Ginoza 2010; Siddle 2003; Uemura 2003). Ryan Yokota (2015) argues, *Uchinaanchu* (O: Okinawan) "joined" the community of the Indigenous peoples of the world in seeking subjectivity and autonomy over their land and their culture. While elements of these analyses are present, much of "Indigenous" Okinawa described in existing academic scholarship stems out of identity consciousness that places Okinawa/ns in a relationship with Japanese and American nationals.

As the aforementioned Asian controversy shows, the transnational circulation of "Indigeneity" has consistently gained traction on the ground when endorsing the recognition of and the rights of Indigenous peoples as a distinct group (Baird 2015, 2016; Erni 2008; Gray

1995; Niezen 2003). In Asia, the articulation of Indigeneity stresses the political situation of being internally colonized or oppressed rather than the original, first, or previous presence in a specific territory (Baird 2015; Sissons 2005). Accordingly, some Asian states refuse recognition of Indigenous peoples or instead claim to be decolonized from the Western empire and therefore all Indigenous. Some states take a stance to acknowledge and respect ethnic diversity within their territorial boundaries (Baird 2015). In Asia, the question, "Who is Indigenous, and how can we make that determination?" is still under discussion by states and international organizations (Baird 2015; Corntassel 2003).

As Michael Hathaway (2010, 303) argues, it is important to see "Indigenous people not as a natural category, but as a social and political category." My perspective also refuses to understand Indigeneity as something natural or essential. Therefore, I aim to move the main focus of this research from the identity politics of Okinawa/ns (which questions whether we are Indigenous or not, for instance) to local agency that repositions communities. This research also interrogates local understanding of people, belonging, and power that has been shaped and reshaped by external pressures and transnational solidarities. As elsewhere in Asia, the label and discourse of Indigeneity in Okinawa continues to cause local controversies, and not everyone acknowledges the term as an appropriate political tool for Okinawan self-determination. By examining the politics of and practices of farming, my research historicizes the land politics in Okinawa and explores how, at which point, and to what extent Okinawans have translated, adapted, and embraced various aspects of "Indigeneity" to practice self-determination.

In Indigenous politics in the western settler societies such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, the theorization of settler colonialism has played an influential role in conceptualizing Indigenous people and how colonialism works. For example, Patrick Wolfe (2006) theorizes settler colonialism as a land acquisition project. He argues that the logic of elimination and the normalization effect of settler colonialism have liquidated Indigenous sovereign rights to land (Wolfe 2006). Wolfe carefully distinguishes the "structure" of settler colonialism from genocide. Echoing Wolfe, Jodi Byrd (2011) argues that settler colonialism continues to ignore and marginalize Indigenous peoples in the discourse of US settler-imperialism.[4] The inclusion of Indigenous peoples into the "postcolonial" and "multicultural"

[4] Byrd (2011) echoes Wolfe's argument of settler colonialism as she critiques "post" colonial theory which racializes and homogenizes experiences and positions of Native Americans and

picture of the United States through the racialization and reinforcement of the idea of "Indianness" perpetuates the settler-colonial structure (Byrd 2011). In Hawai'i, Candace Fujikane (2008) argues Asian settler colonialism is a "constellation of the colonial ideologies" in which Asian settlers have supported and reproduced the settler colonial state while masking dispossession of Native sovereignty and Indigenous claims for self-determination.

The concept of settler colonialism as a structure that undermines Native resistance has been useful in the field of settler colonial studies, which is still largely applied to the contexts of colonizing Native lands in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. In efforts to expand limited understandings of settler colonialism, ann-elise lewallen (2016) unsettles settler colonialism in Japan by considering various artistic forms of resistance practiced by contemporary Ainu women as processes of becoming Indigenous. The story of Ainu women who reclaim and restore their ancestral cultural practices, despite the continuing colonization of Ainu land and pressure for assimilation and erasure of Ainu culture and presence, provides a picture of how settler colonialism operates in the postwar Japanese regime in Hokkaido, northern Japan (lewallen 2016). lewallen, however, does not offer any analysis on the Okinawan situation.

The Ainu are Indigenous people of Hokkaido who were incorporated in the formation of Japan's national self-identity as Japan excluded and marginalized minority populations as "Others." Ainu are reductively imagined as "invisible" and/or "vanishing" people of Japan's geographic peripheries (Graburn and Ertl 2010). Promotion of naturalization and building of national borders vis-à-vis other states led Ainu and Okinawans, who were pre-existing within the national imaginary, to restrict their social activities and exchanges on the frontier and to politically position themselves to be "internal others" (Graburn and Ertl 2010, 6). Political, economic, and cultural enclosure pressured these internal others to assimilate into the modern Japanese societal system (Graburn and Ertl 2010). In his master's thesis, Tomonori Sugimoto (2013) examines histories of Japanese settler colonialism in Hokkaido and Taiwan. While he acknowledges an Okinawan articulation of Indigeneity, he is careful not to analyze Okinawa

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forgets continuity of colonialism on Indigenous land. She explores the "transit" of the US empire in its creation and reproduction of a nation in the forms of racism, territorialization, and civilization. Byrd (2011, 181) also presents "transit" as an analytical strategy and argues that "indigenous trans-Pacific consciousness" supports Indigenous peoples' agency and self-determination that act counterhegemonic to the multiple forms of US imperialism.

through the theoretical lens of settler colonialism because of historical differences in the seizure of native lands and the assimilation of Indigenous subjects.

While I am in agreement with Sugimoto's hesitation to simply align Okinawa with Ainu to challenge settler colonialism in Japan, I argue for the use of the lens of settler militarism, which helps to explain how a discourse of military security has made Okinawa a strategic military colony of postwar empires in the Asia Pacific. Examining various military administrative projects in Hawai'i during World War II under US martial law, Juliet Nebolon (2017b, 25) argues that Hawai'i is a space of settler militarism in which "settler colonialism and militarization have simultaneously perpetuated, legitimated, and concealed one another" through the legitimation of discourses of security and medical programs. Settler militarism in Hawai'i benefitted from land acquisition and displacement of Indigenous peoples (Native Hawaiians) and exclusion of racialized Others (Japanese and Japanese Americans) (Nebolon 2017a, 2017b).

Nebolon (2017b, 25) argues that the "discourse of 'wartime necessity'… rationalized the US military presence and accelerated its acquisition of land" in Hawai'i during World War II and beyond. Since the nineteenth century in the Pacific, such techniques of governance, land acquisition, and military occupation were carried out both by the United States AND Japanese empires (Shigematsu and Camacho 2010). Thinking through historical land grabbing and dynamics of the militarization of Okinawa, I build on Nebolon's argument and borrow the term to argue that Okinawa is also a space of settler militarism legitimated by the Japanese and American governments and the public. The theory of settler militarism also helps us to understand the dominance of the Japanese state over Okinawans for not acknowledging reconstitution of Okinawan (and Ryukyuan) identity politics and Indigenous subjectivity.

The Japanese government responded to the adoption of UNDRIP by expressing the state's hesitation to recognize Indigenous "sovereignty." The Japanese government's strong concern for "national and political unity, or territorial integrity" reveals that the international legal approach to Indigenous rights is limited by a dominant state's understanding of sovereignty (UNGADPI 2007). In fact, while the Japanese government officially recognized the Ainu "as an Indigenous people of northern Japan with a unique language, religion, and culture" in 2008 (*Ainu Minzoku wo Senjūminzoku to suru koto wo Motomeru Ketsugian* 2008), the government has not yet similarly legitimized Okinawans (or Ryukyuans) who claim Indigenous rights of self-determination relating to the land. Any Okinawan claim over land based on Indigenous rights of

self-determination could potentially cause the state to have to negotiate moving the US military bases and to reconsider state security. Instead, the Japanese state has been reducing these rights to the land by keeping it under control.

Throughout these structural processes, the US and Japanese empires tried to force Indigenous Okinawan cultural beliefs and practices to be "assimilated" in the settler "logic of elimination" (Lloyd and Wolfe 2016; Nebolon 2017a, 2017b; Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2011). If we consider Indigeneity solely based on rights and recognition-based understanding of it, stories of Okinawa/ns have not yet challenged the structure of settler colonialism and militarism posed by dealings with Japan and the United States. While the application of an Indigeneity discourse by Okinawans is relatively recent and emerging, counter narratives and counter actions by Okinawans to colonial and military space making have been present for a long time. This is where I saw a gap that performative articulations and social movements through a rights-based model of Indigeneity failed to fill and neglected to address native peoples' non-political connections to Indigenous space. In conversation with recent scholarship of Nebolon's settler militarism and Laurel Mei-Singh's (2016) work on place-based counter narratives to military occupation, my dissertation illustrates how native people in Okinawa have understood and responded to militarization to meet their political, economic, cultural and spiritual needs and connections to their Indigenous space.

Moreover, as observed in Indigenous communities in western settler societies, Indigenous politics as a field has been dominated by a rights-based approach to sovereignty and self-determination (Corntassel 2008, 2012). Rights-based discourse imbues the literature on Okinawan Indigeneity as well (Tanji 2011; Uemura 2003; Yokota 2015). Increasing interests in finding common ground empower many native communities that have suffered under current forms of state domination. In the meantime, overgeneralization of "Indigeneity" with a rights-based discourse leaves translation ambiguity behind and increases the need for careful attention and place-based analysis of when and how the conceptual change occurred (Tsing 2007), and what kinds of constellations of meanings cohere around it when the term travels. Arguing that the fundamental point of Indigenous struggles is in "one's relational, place-based existence," Corntassel (2012, 88) suggests reframing Indigenous self-determination by adding the concept of resurgence and everyday acts of renewal that focus more on relationships and responsibilities to the land and people.

I follow Corntassel's lead and explore the complex nature of Indigeneity and peoples' everyday relationship to the land in Okinawa. Adopting and adapting this approach opens crucial new pathways for exploring Okinawan politics, scholarship which has heretofore been dominated largely by narratives of oppression and suffering. Viewing contemporary Okinawan micropolitics instead through the lens of Indigenous organizing around land responsibility opens a new vantage point, recognizing the everyday agency of Okinawan villagers in sculpting their own self-determination. Overall, examining everyday acts of farming in settler military space in Okinawa, my work unfolds how these land-based practices could become a key venue for making political headway in achieving local goals of self-determination and creating decolonized space.

Mainly located in Yomitan Village of Okinawa, I conducted an ethnographic study from 2014 to 2016. I engaged in a preliminary field study in the summer of 2014 to gather archival data and identify key issues and historical concerns int this local community regarding land use and farming. From October 2015 to August 2016, I lived in Yomitan which enabled me to gather data through participatory observation at local meetings, rallies, and hearings; to conduct semi-structured and unstructured interviews with a range of people, mostly residents of Yomitan, including: village officials, historians, farmers, community leaders, and community activists. In December 2016 and the summer of 2017, I returned to Okinawa to carry out follow-up research and a few interviews.

In the case of all my interviews, I engaged in casual but in-depth conversations with my research participants in Japanese and Okinawan. Translation, therefore, is a crucial process in my research. Most of the gathered data are written and recorded in Japanese. All interviews were conducted in Japanese with occasional use of the local languages by both the interviewer (the author) and interviewees. When I transcribed and translated the data to English, I asked a native speaker of Okinawan to validate my transcription and translation. In the narrative, I changed names to the ones who requested anonymity. While I translated Japanese and Okinawan materials as literally as possible, I also incorporated my critical lens to analyze these discourses and narratives to highlight culturally significant statements and local sensitivities implied in these narrations.

Throughout this dissertation, my work refutes any attempts to dismiss Okinawan resistance against settler militarism and colonial discourses, which would undermine self-

determination of Okinawans. While colonial experiences affected people differently at different times, Okinawan villagers' resistance and resurgence efforts may also contrast in various ways. The handful of stories I introduce in this dissertation are just the leading edge of current imagined possibilities. They are stories about everyday people who are committed to exercising their self-determination and responsibility whether they self-align with the global Indigeneity discourse or not. "Change Happens one Warrior at a Time" as Alfred and Corntassel (2005, 613) note, and these self-perpetuating, incremental acts of farming help to sketch out a decolonized path of Indigenous futures for Okinawa. What is important to nurture in the process of Indigenous resurgence is not to look solely and narrowly for similarities and organized collective actions, but to examine small efforts to cooperate and coexist while respecting the distinctiveness of individuals.

In *Trans-Indigenous: Methodologies for Global Native Literary Studies*, Chadwick Allen (2012) suggests developing Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationships and practices in literary scholarship that traverse contemporary nation-states. Focusing on "the *global Indigenous*," Allen (2012, xvii) reorients Indigenous studies in complex conversations of histories, cultures, and literacies. Rather than comparing them, Allen (2012, xiii, xxvi) suggests juxtaposing Indigenous studies to work "together (yet)[remain] *distinct*" by "reading across" and recognizing Indigeneity in transnational approaches to imperialism, colonialism, and the ongoing (post)colonial situations. My work also follows Allen's methodological approach which encourages recovery and re-interpretation of "similarly" situated Indigenous communities.

In Hawai'i, where many Okinawan scholars and leaders have sought solidarity with the Indigenous people, various Native Hawaiian scholars have contributed to epistemological successes in understanding Hawaiian land, life, and stories. For example, Davianna Pōmaika'i McGregor (2007) explains cultural *kīpuka* not just as sacred spaces but also living spaces where Kanaka center their ability to practice, invigorate and regenerate Hawaiian culture and belief in everyday life. Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua (2014, 5) discusses the meaning of *ea* to include "the mutual interdependence of all life forms and forces" by revisiting implied meanings of *ea* and refuting poor, reductive translation of the concept to a Westphalian, state-based notion of sovereignty. The growing number of works by native scholars show their careful attention and commitment to a community and the possibilities of Indigenous scholarship that expand beyond

the nation-state (e.g., Aikau, Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, and Silva 2016; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Hussey, and Wright 2014).

My scholarly training in Hawaiʻi has helped me to develop Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationships and to participate in activism such as the Hawaiʻi Okinawa Alliance (2017) and Oceania Rising (2017). These experiences have activated discussions and built trans-pacific alliances among Indigenous peoples of militarized islands, which have fostered careful examinations of the critical relationship between Indigenous peoples and the militarization of islands. Located at "empire's edge," such alliances create affinity-seeking imagined communities (Davis 2015). Furthermore, activists and scholars of such new movements have offered a counter hegemonic understanding of geopolitical spaces, landscapes, and seascapes to seek alternative ways of connecting and relating with each other. This is exemplified in how Indigenous peoples overcome "shape-shifting colonial powers" and develop "Indigenous mobilization strategies," as Corntassel (2012, 92, 95) suggests for envisioning resurgence. The resurgence documented in my work in Okinawa lead me to discuss several important research findings.

Findings

Reading across trans-Indigenous scholarship and thinking through long-term ethnographic research, my research has produced four major findings. First, Indigeneity, as a globally circulated label and discourse, has been problematic in Asia, and Okinawa is no exception. Nevertheless, Indigeneity in Okinawa has been used as a trans-local tool of political organizing and resistance, in which local organizers and leaders can ground the globally circulating discourse on Indigenous rights in order to exert pressure on the state for the purpose of gaining community recognition, acknowledgement of cultural distinctiveness, and (at least limited) land use rights.

Second, everyday practices of farming maintain and prepare the ground for, and perhaps even constitute, an Indigenous resurgence. While farming on militarized land (i.e., tacit farming) was considered a Native tactic of postwar survival, the continuity of the practice reveals people's efforts and wills to refuse fenced and partitioned land and to reconfigure landscapes that anchor their intimate connection to the ancestral world.

Third, the everyday use of Indigenous languages (*shimakutuba*), functions as a vehicle to actualize the imagination of Indigenous landscape. Okinawan narratives in Indigenous languages challenge the settler-colonial and settler-military geographies and histories of Okinawa/ns.

Shimakutuba practices is a set of cultural revitalization activism which Okinawans intentionally or unintentionally remember to regenerate our imminent powers. Indigenous landscapes narrated in *shimakutuba* is a form of what Mishuana Goeman (2013, 4) calls "spatial decolonization." Everyday use of *shimakutuba* endorses Indigenous understandings of social, cultural, and political space and reclaims the heritage of Indigenous modes of thought and action. While the label of global "Indigeneity" leaves gaps and rubs against translation and application at the local level, careful attention to languages and epistemology could soothe these frictions. Instead, revisiting native languages opens possibilities to understand place-based cosmographies, which a rights-based discourse of "Indigeneity" finds difficult to encompass.

Finally, the continuity of farming practices and the reclamation of farmscapes seek to revalue Indigeneity, since this concept in Okinawa, has included negative ideas of primitive, uneducated, poor peasants. Social, political, and economic changes in the postwar developing environment altered traditional forms of engaging with the land. While the double bind of economic self-determination and socio-political understanding of Indigenous governance has reflected various anxieties and vulnerabilities in communities (Cattelino 2010), this dissertation focuses on and highlights Okinawan farmers' agency in re-configuring the meaning of farming practices as their exercise of self-determination. In doing so, everyday practices of farming in Okinawa help us to understand how farming could address Indigenous efforts to seek sustainable self-determination, restore their relationship to natural resources, and regenerate aspects of Indigenous life (Corntassel 2008).

In thinking of Indigenous economic alternatives, Glen Coulthard (2014, 172) reminds us that our challenge to settler-colonial capitalism must include work to emancipate ourselves from "colonial, racist, and patriarchal legal and political obstacles." Okinawa's agricultural scene indeed comprises intersecting multiple vectors of power. There are many ways to examine Okinawan land politics and Indigeneity, with the analytical lenses of class, gender, age, locality, and others. The patriarchal and racist nature of social relations in Japan, including Okinawa raises another set of questions about the unrecognized and muted voices and actions of Okinawan women. Although most of my research participants were Okinawan men, some smallholding farmers are women. The commercial agricultural sector is also supported by many local women's labor. The important work of (ethnohi) storytelling is done by women, who are passionate about collecting, documenting, and presenting the unique worldviews of Okinawan

communities. Women's involvement and contribution to the Okinawan micro-politics of resistance and Indigenous resurgence are undeniable, and further studies are necessary to enrich the pictures and narratives of Okinawa. While I am aware of these various intersections formed and reflected in the field and communities I researched, I have chosen to focus on the examination of farming practices by Okinawans regardless of age and gender.

My dissertation aims to set the ground for the critical analysis of displacement of Okinawans by settler colonial and settler military regimes by emphasizing the contested visions of land and ways of being. Future studies on these topics might include critical gender analyses embedded in the politico-cultural structure of Okinawa. For example, one might examine the matriarchal community and management of commons on Kudaka Island, which is also known as the land of the deities. Another research project might explore the dynamics of gender roles and expectations in the agricultural sector by comparing small-scale and industrialized farming operations. A close and critical examination of Okinawan women's experiences with knowledge about the land undoubtedly would open up further possibilities for liberation from the hegemony of settler colonialism, militarism, and patriarchy. The emergence of these Indigenous resurgents throughout Okinawa shapes a moral landscape and solidifies future pathways to demilitarization and decolonization. Practices of farming are powerful Indigenous claims to the land, cosmologies, and ways of life. Investigation of these farming practices is presented in a logical fashion in the following chapters of this work.

Chapters

Each chapter in this dissertation focuses on a different aspect of everyday livelihood in rural Okinawa. I highlight the narratives of the non-elites while using their engagement with the land and farming as a basis for connecting their stories. Accordingly, Indigenous resurgence has become a theoretical approach to move our understanding of the everyday practices of Okinawans as "acting beyond resistance" (Alfred 2005, 151), and to see a diverse picture of a hundred acts of Okinawan world-making through their land-based practices. While Indigenous resurgence underpins the entire dissertation, I also draw on other theoretical frameworks to better narrate Indigenous studies by reading across and re-interpreting similarly situated Indigenous communities and their scholarships (Allen 2012, xxvi).

The first chapter, "The Formation of Settler Military Space and Disrupted Peoplehood," traces historical formations of settler military space in Okinawa. I begin with a brief description

of rural community settlements in Yomitan of Okinawa Island before the annexation of the Ryukyuan Kingdom in 1879. My narrative of Okinawan history in this chapter focuses on land-centered projects that contributed to diminishing Indigenous control over the land and land use. This picture was complicated when Okinawa was engulfed by world affairs, and became a space of settler militarism thorough the discourses of (inter)national security by the Japanese and American empires. In preparation for drawing attention to and arguing for Indigenous actions of resurgence in Okinawa, Chapter 1 discusses the historical continuity of settler military structure over Okinawa/ns.

The second chapter, "An Artful Way of Making Indigenous Space," shows the emergence of Indigenous space in Okinawa through a review and analysis of land use planning in Yomitan Village. This research examines how local communities have historically been organized and situated and how these self-governing entities and community leaders cooperate to create the alternative land use of militarized space. I explore the dispute over the former Yomitan Airfield to unpack contested understandings and forms of belonging to, occupation over, and usage of the land. Since local protests and resistance against the military occupation continue throughout the island since the Battle of Okinawa, in 1945, this chapter also highlights Okinawan resistance to American AND Japanese settler militarism. The Yomitan Airfield example demonstrates an artful way of Indigenous repossession of militarized land by a local community. Furthermore, the repossession of the Yomitan Airfield shows when, how, and to what extent "Indigeneity" matters in the contemporary land politics in Okinawa.

In Chapter 3, "Storying the Indigenous Landscape in *Shimakutuba*" I analyze the links among *shimakutuba* (O: Indigenous languages of Okinawa), the land, and the community. Many Indigenous languages elsewhere are endangered, and similarly, native languages in Okinawa were also affected by the genocidal impact of settler colonialism. While Okinawa with the current prefectural administrative leadership has encouraged language revitalization projects, this chapter focuses on the more ordinary efforts of using Indigenous languages by local people. Building on Goeman's (2013, 1) examination of "the use of historical and culturally situated spatial epistemologies, geographic metaphors, and the realities they produce" through her analysis of Native women's writing, I argue that the active and deliberate use of *shimakutuba* in the conversations of local Okinawans is a demonstration of "spatial justice" that memorializes native connections to the land. Examples of practices by two groups, Ryūkyū-ko and Higa-za,

show that their use of *shimakutuba* preserves and revitalizes various *shimakutuba* narratives for Okinawans to link their identity with a place and with their ancestors while unsettling and refuting settler military space making of Okinawa. The practice also validates the knowledge and experiences of the ancestors suggesting that many histories, landscapes, and languages are possible in the Indigenous futures.

The fourth chapter, "Tacit Farming and Mapping Ancestral Footprints," examines the politics of tacit farming or *mokunin kōsaku,* the cultivation of land which is officially occupied and controlled by the US military. I begin with the examination of the emergence of tacit farming in postwar Okinawa. While scholarly works have documented the land struggles at this time, few stories of tacit farming have been recorded or discussed. This chapter explores how farming served as a strategy of survival for impoverished Okinawans in the postwar confusion. The second part of the chapter analyzes the contemporary practices of tacit farming with fences, such as in Sobe, and without fences such as in Kina. Seventy-two years have passed since the war, and forty-five years have passed since Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration. Postwar rehabilitation efforts resulted in significant recovery of the society and the economy. While negotiations over land access and leasing seem to have settled to some extent between Okinawan landowners and settler military occupiers, tacit farming practices continue on active US military bases. Drawing upon interviews and field observations, I explore the ingrained reasons and desires of tacit farmers. The practices of tacit farming on the US military base sustain their strong and resilient cultural and spiritual connections with the land and allow them to re-imagine fence-free Indigenous space.

Chapter 5, "Re-claiming Farmscapes: Indigenous Resurgence in Cooperative and Commercial Farming," analyzes agricultural landscapes and considers the farmers in Yomitan. The land dispute about the planning of the Yomitan Airfield (discussed in Chapter 2) resulted in the creation of agrarian space in Yomitan Village, encouraging economic autonomy and rural revitalization. The agrarian transition of land repossession and reform in postwar Okinawa suggested some rethinking of what it meant to be a farmer in this community at different times. The first part of the chapter discusses Yomitan's village branding with *Yomitan Beniimo* and its effect on the village economy and cultural education. The second part focuses on the small-scale farmers and *Chisan-Chisho* 地産地消 (J: local-production local-consumption) movements. With the large allocation of returned lands to agricultural and infrastructure building, Yomitan Village

has promoted agricultural industries and the Chisan-Chisho movement. Accordingly, farmers of small plots in Yomitan have been invited to participate in a new form of social interaction and economic activity. These smallholding farmers have entered a broader agricultural marketplace and this transition has changed the meanings of land-based products and practices for villagers. The final part of this chapter examines commercial farming and farmers. A new policy on the corporatization of agricultural management has resulted in the consolidation of small farmers into companies that manage agricultural businesses. This change requires farmers to cultivate their knowledge in running businesses in addition to providing high quality agricultural products. Drawing from interviews with young commercial farmers, I explore their initiatives, engagements, and efforts in changing unpopular images of farming and farmers to positive, hopeful ones. Overall, Chapter 5 aims to reconsider farming and farmers in this new space where settler military and capitalist accumulation have transformed Indigenous economic infrastructure and activities (Lloyd and Wolfe 2016). While there are many unintended consequences and new challenges facing native farmers when working within the existing political system and capitalist economy, this chapter attempts to shift agency from the state and cooperatives to local, small scale, individual farmers.

Chapter 6 “Resurgents Create a Moral Landscape” comprises various stories of young Okinawans who demonstrate a commitment to cherishing our ancestors’ knowledge and dedication to the land. Stories from these emerging actors also feature difficulties each faces in his or her everyday life while incrementally stepping towards his or her goal of Indigenous resurgence. Obstacles include the continuous pressures of urbanization and militarization, complications with self-identity, and difficulties in negotiating and coexisting with settlers. While these obstacles might discourage and isolate their practices, my research participants show their commitment to the land-based farming and community-based activism of restoring and polishing the Indigenous landscape. In so doing, everyday farming becomes an expression of repurposing acts in seeking to change the existing settler military structures. Chapter 6 is written as I look ahead to the future of Okinawa with hope and support for these passionate Indigenous resurgents.

CHAPTER 1

The Formation of Settler Military Space and Disrupted Peoplehood

The annual Yomitan Festival ends with an original creative performance, *Shinkōsen* 進貢船, played by Yomitan villagers. Since 1985, villagers have performed this play, a story of the homecoming of a Ryukyuan trading vessel *Shinkōsen* and Lord (O: *aji*) Taiki from Uza in Yomitan who first traveled to and opened trading with Ming (China) in 1372 (Akamine 2004; Asato et al. 2004; Yamauchi 2014). In November 2015, as the *Shinkōsen* entered the festival site (see fig. 2), a village elder gave words of welcome in *shimakutuba*:

> *Chuunu yukaruhii masaruhini, kunu Yuntanja matsuri kara, kurikara sakizakin miruku yugafu unigeesun muraashibi yaibiin. Unu Taiki-buniya ichiwakari suruatai tuusanukuni, Too nu kunikara umin shikin ai, shinkanuchaa hikichiriti, bunka bunbutsu kugani dakara yamamajin shimenchoon. Ippee nifee deebiru. Chuuya Yuntanja majiri muramura kara mensoochi, tageeni miruku yugafu unigee sabira. Too too shinkanuchaa, matsuri yaibiin, teeku uchinarachi udui hani, warai fukukanti sakaefuku nigati muraashibi sabira.*
>
> On this beautiful day, this Yomitan Festival is a village celebration to pray for future years of abundance. Despite the dangerous voyage to a country far away, Taiki's *Shinkōsen* with his crew brought a bountiful treasure back. Thank you very much. Today, with guests from each *aza* of Yomitan Village, let's pray for *miruku yugafu*[5] (O: a year of abundance). Everyone, let's play drums, dance together, and enjoy this festival today.

The two-day festival reaches a climax with this *Shinkōsen* performance. This year, the *Shinkōsen* featured a special guest, the President of the Yomitan Club in Hawai'i. The Yomitan Club is a group established by families who emigrated from Yomitan and settled in Hawai'i (Yomitan Club 1998). Descendants of the original Club have continued the organization and its activities. (Yomitan Club 1998). On the deck of the *Shinkōsen*, the Club President shyly waved his hand and gave a Hawaiian shaka to villagers.

[5] *Miruku yugafu* is a traditional Okinawan belief that a god *Miroku* (the Buddhist bodhisattva Maitreya) visits his home and brings prosperity and happiness to people.

Figure 2. The *Shinkōsen* performance at the Yomitan Festival. November 1, 2015. Photograph by the author.

The Yomitan Festival in the following year was even more special because it was held in conjunction with the Sixth Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, a gathering hosted by the Okinawa Prefecture every five years to celebrate the homecoming of Okinawan descendants from diasporic communities and to foster the *Uchinaanchu* Network (The 6th WUF Executive Committee Office 2016). The 2016 Yomitan Festival opened with more than 100 guests from overseas locations—such as Hawai‘i, the continental United States, and Brazil—who are descendants of out-migrants from Yomitan (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2017). Other municipalities in Okinawa also hosted similar events and welcomed *Uchinaanchu* from overseas. During their homecoming, some returnees enjoy a reunion with their family and friends; others find their ancestral roots and relatives for the first time. The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival provides a

venue for *Uchinaanchu* from diasporic communities to re-learn and re-cultivate Okinawa's unique "soft power" (The 6th WUF Executive Committee Office 2016). We can see that through people's engagement in a deep understanding of the history and culture, Okinawan Indigeneity lives and circulates, not only locally, but across international borders. This circuit has developed through multiple experiences in different geographical locales while *Uchinaanchu* maintain and reconnect with the ontological basis of the communities in Okinawa. Acknowledging the circuit of *Uchinaanchu* diaspora is important to think about Okinawa's history of displacement caused by forces of colonialism, and ponder the possibility of alternative forms of communities and connections not captured by the frameworks of ethnicity, nation, or *minzoku*—the Japanese term that interchangeably translates to ethnicity or nation.

In this dissertation, I use "Okinawa" to indicate Okinawa Island (see fig. 3), with the terms Okinawa and Ryukyu used interchangeably. Whereas Okinawa mostly references the geographical area of the Okinawa Prefecture, it also connotes historical, political, and cultural meanings from the Ryukyu era. Likewise, "Okinawan" does not refer only to the people from the Okinawa Prefecture. Beyond one's residency, being Okinawan (or *Uchinaanchu*) has specific political and cultural implications. Although it has been translated into one word in English, Okinawan, there are several other names for Okinawan people. The most common term used by Okinawan people to ethnically identify themselves is *Uchinaanchu*, as opposed to *Yamatonchu* or *Naichaa* (O: mainland Japanese). *Uchinaanchu* is also used for ethnic Okinawans in diasporic communities. Other examples of names include: Okinawa-*jin* (J: Okinawan people), Okinawa-*kenmin* (J: Okinawan prefectural citizens), *Shimanchu* (O: community people or islander), Ryūkyū-*jin* (J: Ryukyu people), and Ryūkyū-*minzoku* (J: Ryukyu nation).

Figure 3. Map of Okinawa Island. This map was created in March 1990. Courtesy of Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

In order to fully understand the ontology and politics of Okinawan Indigeneity, some background history is necessary. In this chapter, I provide a brief history of the landscape and community changes in Okinawa and explain how native Okinawans lost control over their land and cultural sites. Rather than defining Okinawa as a single-entity Indigenous community, I focus on historical orientations of communities that comprised and underpinned the social structure of Okinawa. More specifically, I pay attention to those of Yomitan Village, the primary site of my field research, and contextualize them within the larger historical and political currents. In many ways, Yomitan is a microcosm of Okinawan society.

I use a peoplehood matrix as a theoretical benchmark to understand characteristics of Okinawan micro-communities (i.e., *aza* and *mura*) that I describe later. Tom Holm, J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis (2003) in American Indian literary studies developed the peoplehood matrix to describe Native American social relations and knowledge systems. Holm, Pearson, and Chavis (2003) argued that a peoplehood matrix consists of four essential, intertwined elements inherent in identity and behavior: sacred history, the ceremonial cycle, language, and the place/territory. More importantly, these four elements are interwoven inextricably in a balanced way of being (Holm, Pearson and Chavis 2003). In their words, "No single factor is more important than the others and all necessarily support each other as well as a particular group's larger sense of identity" (Holm, Pearson, and Chavis 2003, 12). I utilize this concept of peoplehood to think about the ontology of Okinawan micro-communities. While Okinawan and Native American communities are different in historical, political, economic, and many other ways, this concept of peoplehood helps to break away from nation-state centered notions of Indigenous communities and to critically approach settler colonialism and militarism that threatens to dispossess and erase Indigenous ontological presences and epistemologies.

This chapter argues for the Indigenous and continuing presence of peoplehood matrices in Okinawa and the historical formation of Okinawa as a settler colonial and military space by the Japanese and US empires. As mentioned in the introduction, defining "Indigenous" Okinawan is difficult and controversial when the predominant definition and understandings of "Indigenous" by international organizations and host states tend to emphasize the "colonized" condition and/or numerically minority status in a host state. In this dissertation, I use Indigeneity as a politico-cultural identity and argue that it builds upon Okinawan people's understanding of

community well-being in the processes of colonial-space making of the Japanese government and continued occupation by the US military.

Patrick Wolfe (2006, 390) stresses that settler colonialism is not an event but a "complex social formation" that continues through time. Wolfe (2006, 393) claims,

> [S]ettler colonialism is an inclusive, land-centred project that coordinates a comprehensive range of agencies, from the metropolitan centre to the frontier encampment, with a view to eliminating Indigenous societies. Its operations are not dependent on the presence or absence of formal state institutions or functionaries.

Moreover, he demonstrates how the logic of elimination is carried out with a range of strategies of assimilation and land projects such as territorial acquisition, spatial removal, and displacement. Over time these strategies work to normalize settler power over native peoples and erase an Indigenous presence. Drawing upon scholarship on US settler colonialism and its connection with militarization, Juliet Nebolon (2017a) argues for the concept of "settler militarism," in which land-centered projects are used by the US military for global expansion and empire building in Asia and the Pacific. Building on this concept of settler militarism by examining displacement and resettlement experienced by Okinawan communities through colonial and wartime projects, I argue that Okinawa has become a settler colonial and military space and Okinawans have become Indigenous subjects. This chapter focuses on peoplehood matrices manifested in Yomitan and land-centered projects in the history of Okinawa. While I borrow the lens of settler colonialism and militarism, my focus is not to reveal who "the Settler" and "the Indigenous" populations are in the social structure. Rather, I analyze the social structure as one of colonial and imperial assimilation, replacement, and elimination of native cosmologies, land-based presence, practices and knowledge. The Indigenous presence is firmly based in the land. Paying attention to the important balance of peoplehood elements, I discuss how the formation of settler miltiary space disrupted peoplehood matrices in Okinawa that led to the reconstitution and emergence of Indigenous subjectivity.

Outline of Yomitan

Yomitan Village is located on the west coast of the central part of Okinawa Island, a vast peninsular protruding into the East China Sea (see fig. 3). The village is 17 miles (28 kilometers) north of the prefectural capital Naha City (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013c). Yomitan is adjacent to Onna Village in the north, Okinawa City in the east, and Kadena Town in the south.

National Route 58, which is the main road of Okinawa Island, traverses the village longitudinally. The village area is 3,528 hectares (8,717 acres), and it is the eighteenth largest in the prefecture (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013c). Since 2014, the village population has exceeded 40,000 people, the largest for a village in Japan, and currently constitutes 23 peoplehood matrices (see fig. 4) and 19 administrative districts (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013c). The east side of the village slopes gradually upward to the top of the Yomitan Hills (O: *Yuntanja*) which are 656 feet (200 meters) above sea level (Heibonsha 2002, 373). In the west, karst tableland spreads downward from the top of the hill featuring the Zakimi Castle ruin at 426 feet (130 meters) above sea level to the coast (Heibonsha 2002, 373).

The peoplehood matrices discussed in this dissertation are called *aza* and are the smallest community units below the municipal level (i.e., *shichōson* 市町村). In 2004, along with the increase in population, Yomitan Village established new administrative boundaries. By combining some of the *aza* communities together, Yomitan became newly organized into 19 administrative districts to enhance public administrative processes and promote community welfare and disaster prevention activities (Yomitan-son 2013). While the administrative district is a unit area set up for executing administrative affairs, the peoplehood matrices of *aza* and *jichikai*[6] provide supplementary organization for the village and refer to place-based organized communties (Yomitan-son 2013). Many of *aza* date back to the Ryukyuan *majiri* administrative system.

[6] Villagers use *aza* and *jichikai* interchangeably. While *jichikai* is a noun, *aza* is often used both as a noun and a prefix to a community name.

Figure 4. Map of twenty-three *aza* in Yomitan.

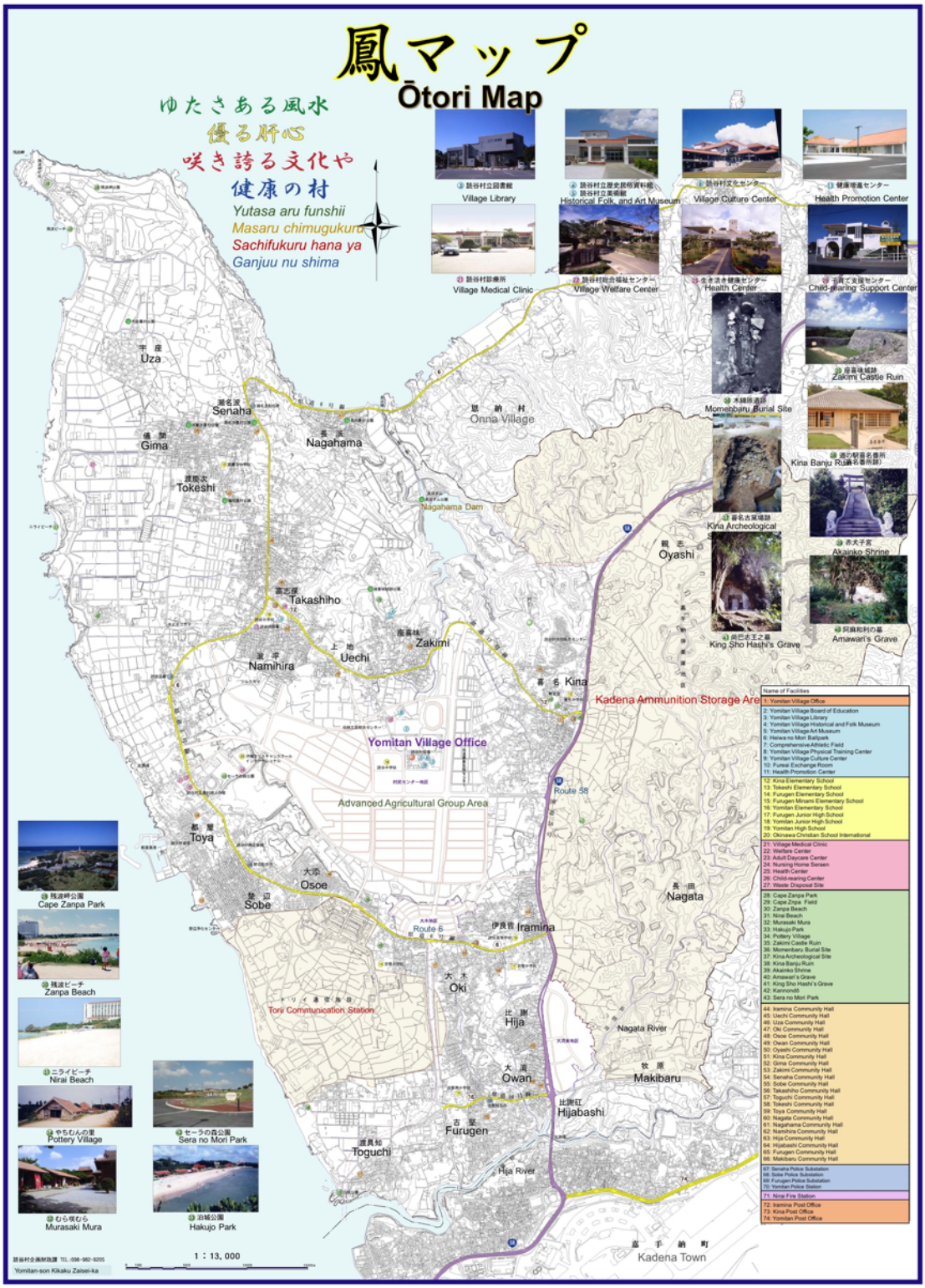

Figure 5. The Ōtori map of Yomitan Village with twenty-three *aza* names. Source: Ōtori Map (Yomitan-son Kikaku Zaisei-ka 2013).

Old and New: Annexation and Traditional Landholding

In the Ryukyu Kingdom period (1429–1879), a system of collective landholding called *jiwari seido* 地割制度 existed throughout the island (Asato et al. 2004; Okinawa-ken 1977). Much of the arable land was maintained as village commons with periodic allocation to commoners (O: *jiinchu*) (Asato et al. 2004; Okinawa-ken 1977; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989).[7] Under this collective landholding system, villagers paid taxes of rice, grain, and sugar to the Ryukyu Kingdom and the Satsuma while they were also obliged to cultivate the land of officials (Asato et al 2004; Arashiro 1994; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989).

The 1609 military invasion and subsequent formation of the Ryukyuan Islands as a colonial space by the Japanese feudal domain Satsuma was the first major turning point in loss of control over the land. After the invasion and military occupation, the Satsuma domain gradually absorbed the authority and control of government policy from the Ryukyu Kingdom through land-centered projects of Japanese feudalism (Asato et al. 2004, 133; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). The Satsuma leadership conducted land surveys, positioned the Ryukyu King as one retainer of the Satsuma domain, and issued "The Fifteen Injunctions" covering the entire Ryukyu region (Asato et al. 2004, 134). This law aimed to restrict the authority of the Ryukyu King so that the Satsuma could smoothly take control of the Ryukyu (Asato et al. 2004). They also developed policies to collect tributes, to control the foreign trade and Ryukyu diplomacy, and to directly control the official royal class of the Ryukyu Kingdom (Asato et al. 2004).

Uechi Ichiro[8] (2005, 86) argued that the customary landholding of the old Ryukyu was subsumed and institutionalized as one of the governing mechanisms of the Ryukyu Kingdom after the transformation into modern Ryukyu triggered by the 1609 Satsuma invasion. Similar forms of communal tenure existed in other parts of Asia such as the Philippines and Cambodia

[7] When the Satsuma conducted a land survey in the Ryukyu in the 1720s, there were various types of land which could be roughly categorized into three types: (1) farmers' land, *hyakushōchi* 百姓地, which was seventy percent of the arable land and was distributed to villagers; (2) official land including *jitōchi* 地頭地 given to land stewards appointed by the Ryukyu Kingdom, *oekachi* オエカ地 given to village officials, and *norokumoichi* ノロクモイ地 given to *nuuru* (O: village priestess); and (3) uncultivated lands, *shiakechi* 仕明地, which were designated for reclamation (Asato et al. 2004; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989; Uechi 2005).

[8] Both in the text and references, Japanese names in Japanese language publications are listed following traditional usage (i.e., family name followed by the given name).

(Andersen 2011; Baird 2015; Uechi 2005). As Tania Li (2010) observed elsewhere in Asia, collective landholding has often been a part of paternalistic colonial projects to divide populations and to limit the mobility of people in a particular area. In Okinawa (or the Ryukyu) as well, the existing communal landholding system became a method of top-down governance by the Satsuma domain and the first step in the loss of land contol. The early formation of and control of colonial space in the Ryukyuan Islands continued for a couple of centuries until the disintegration of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1879 known as *Ryūkyū Shobun* 琉球処分 and subsequent annexation within modern Japanese nation-state building.

Traditional Landscape and Community Settlement

Yomitan peoplehood matrices have a long history. Under the traditional land division and governing unit system of the Ryukyu Kingdom, the Ryukyuan Islands were divided into *majiri* 間切 districts. The current Yomitan Village area belonged to Yuntanja *majiri*. *Majiri* are broadly similar to current municipalities (J: *shichōson* 市町村), and the smallest sized communities under *majiri* were called *mura.*[9] Public administrative agencies placed *banju* for each *majiri* district and *murayaa* for each *mura*. The office of Yuntanja *majiri* was located in the current *aza* Kina (see fig. 5, No. 38) and has long served as a hub of village governance and administration (Kina-shi Henshū Iinkai 1998). Its landmark has been preserved as Kina Bansho and maintained carefully by Yomitan Village. According to the first official chorography of the Ryukyu Kingdom *Ryūkyū-koku yūrai-ki* compiled in 1713, there were sixteen *mura* in Yomitan (Heibonsha 2002; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 64). These *mura* were Chinaa, Iranma, Fiija, Wan, Furugin, Tuguchi, Subi, Zachimi, Uichi, Hanja, Takashippu, Tukishi, Jiima, Uuja, Shinaha, and Nagahama (Heibonsha 2002). In 1893, there were 45 *majiri* and 562 *mura* in the Ryukyu Islands (Arashiro 1994, 110). In the late eighteenth century, many aristocrats of the Ryukyu Kingdom suffered from a financial crisis, left the capital of Shuri, and settled in the countryside where they reclaimed lands. This phenomenon of disemployment, resettlement, and community formation by aristocrats is called *yaadui* 屋取 which literally translates to "stay in other places."

[9] Nakamatsu Yashū (1979) argues that the term *mura* was introduced after the Satsuma invasion in the Ryukyu Islands. Prior to that (and even now), the term *shima* was used to refer to communities. The term shima has been used equivalently to *aza* and *mura* (Okinawa Daihyakkajiten Kankō Henshūkyoku 1983). In this chapter, I use *aza* and *mura* because the terms have territorial connotations.

The *Yaadui* communities formed in Yomitan are Toya, Oki, Hijabashi, Oyashi, Makibaru, and Nagata (Heibonsha 2002). Many of the contemporary twenty-three peoplehood matrices (O/J: *aza*) of Yomitan originate in administrative communities of the Ryukyu Kingdom period (1429–1879).

Traditionally, the natural landscape of typical Okinawan villages encompassed the hilly uplands and stretched to lowland areas along the shore. The topography of Yomitan is largely divided into two geographical areas. On the east side, there is an old geological stratum, forming a hilly land where ridges and valleys are intertwined, such as Yomitan Hills (O: Yuntanja) and Takō Mountain. On the west side projecting into the East China Sea, there is a geologically younger stratum composed mainly of Ryukyu limestone or old corals raised above sea levels (O: *inoo* in fig. 6). Each land division also included a lowland cultivated area (O: *haru*, *baru* in fig. 6) and an upland forested area (O: *mui* in fig. 6). The traditional land division and land use comprise many essential environmental resources for peoples' survival, including watersheds (O: *urigaa*) and areas with an abundance of spring water (O: *kaa*).

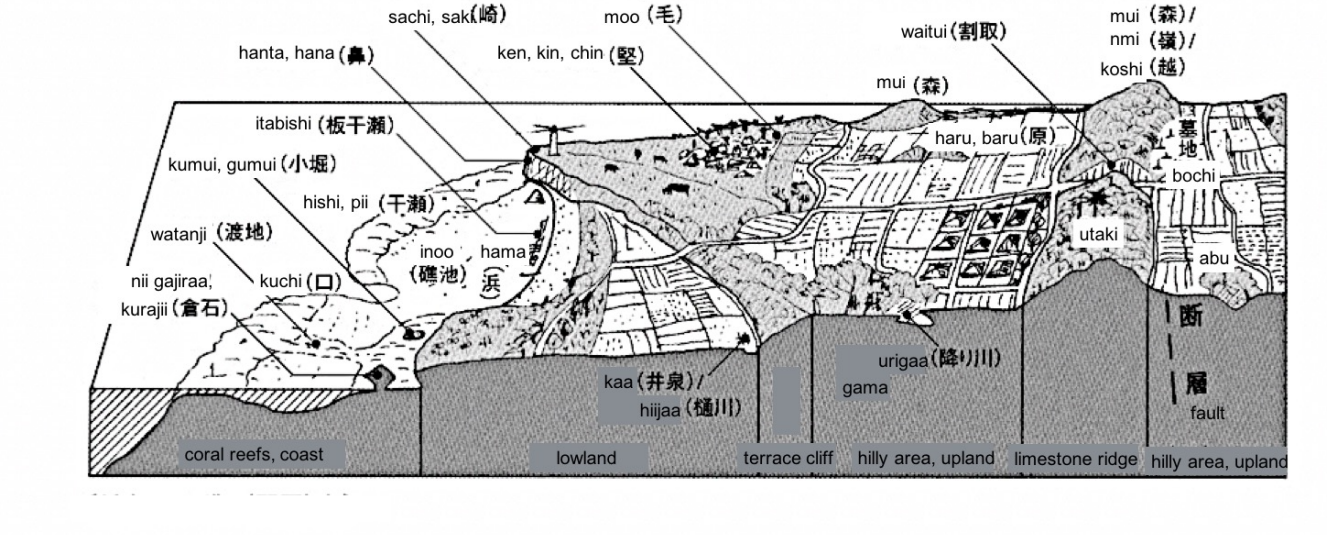

Figure 6. Landscape and topographical terms of Okinawa in *Shimakutuba*. Source: *Nihon chimei taikei* (Heibonsha 2002).

The traditional landscape also contained spiritual elements of significance to the community. While sites with abundant natural resources were considered sacred, other worship sites (O: *uganju*) and *utaki* (O: sacred grove in fig. 6) were embedded in the natural landscape. For example, Uuja *mura* (current *aza* Uza) was located at the northern tip of Yomitan Village (see fig. 4), in a gently sloping landscape. A famous scenic spot, the Cape Zampa has a cliff on the northern coast and a vast sandy shore (O: *inoo*) at the southwestern side. The community was blessed with abundant fishing grounds and flourished as a farming and fishing village (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). Currently, *aza* Uza preserves and maintains thirteen sacred sites in the community and make regularly visits in December and January to offer prayers (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). These sites include a highly sacred place, *Sunumee Dunchi;* remaining ancestral houses in the community, *Kunishii* and *Naabinaku*; a former ceremonial site, *Kami-asagi*; prayer sites focusing on the sea, *Nirai-kanai*[10] and for safe voyage, *Agari-nu-kami-nu-yaa* and *Iri-nu-kami-nu-yaa*; a blowhole, *Suufuchi-gama*; wells, *Iri-gaa, Agari-gaa, Waranja-gaa, Ikiga-gaa, Machida-gaa*; and a small pond, *Ishi-gumui* to worship the water source (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014).

The topography also shaped the community's economic activities. Villagers from inland communities engaged in agriculture. For instance, Subi *mura* (current *aza* Sobe) was located on a vast flat plain and its west side faces the East China Sea (Heibonsha 2002). Because of limited water resources, the land was mostly used for dry-field farming (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). While the origin of agriculture in Yomitan is not known precisely, the village has been recognized as a major production area of sugar cane and sweet potatoes for several centuries (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). Sugar cane cultivation for brown sugar in the Ryukyu began in 1623 after Gima Shinjō from Jiima *mura* sent delegates to Fujian China to acquire brown sugar production skills (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). Brown sugar was an important agricultural product since the Ryukyu Kingdom used it as a tribute payment to the Satsuma domain (Ryūkyū Seifu 1989; Matsumura 2015). Pest-resistant and high yield sugar cane has grown throughout Okinawa since the mid-1800s. The variety is called "Yuntanzan-*shu*," which was improved and produced by a Yomitan villager from Subi *mura* (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 186). In the early 1900s, Subi set up five guilds (J: *kumi*) of sugar cane farmers. Each *kumi*

[10] In Okinawan traditional beiliefs, *Niraikanai* is a faraway land across the sea, the source of happiness brought by the gods.

had a sugar house called a *Saataayaa* which was equipped with two cane compressors (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 182). These farmers' guilds were formed based on the land size. An owner of the largest land area served as a main land steward, directly administering the lands and farmers of twelve farming households (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 183). Subi *mura* was also well known for a variety of sweet potato called "*Subi Kuragaa 'nmu*" (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 176; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). Villagers grew sweet potatoes for themselves and their livestock, sold sugar cane to earn cash, and bought rice and other necessities (Asato et al. 2004).

Coastline communities like Subi *mura* also actively carried out fishery (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The west coast of Yomitan is covered by vast coral reefs (O: *inoo* in fig. 6). Fishermen named sea areas corresponding to shape and use, and used different fishing grounds depending on the season and the weathere (see fig. 7; Tajima 2013). In coastal shallows enclosed by coral reefs (O: *inoo* in fig. 6), there is a kind of crack called *kuchi* (see fig. 6) where the ebbing tide exits. This is also an important natural boat harbor. In the coral reef area, there are certain environmental units corresponding with locations of *kuchi*, the flow of tide, and the size and locations of fringing reefs (Tajima 2013). In a community like Subi *mura* that depends on both farming and fishing, settlements locate at spring water points (O: *kaa* in fig. 6), from which roads are drawn and connected to the sea area (Tajima 2013). Boundaries of *mura* are connected with *kuchi*, and the range of *mura* includes ocean (Tajima 2013). The wider the *inoo* is, the larger the range of *mura* that holds it (Tajima 2013). Within the collective landholding system, traditional community settlements clearly included the sea area and people's land use were based on their surrounding land and seascape.

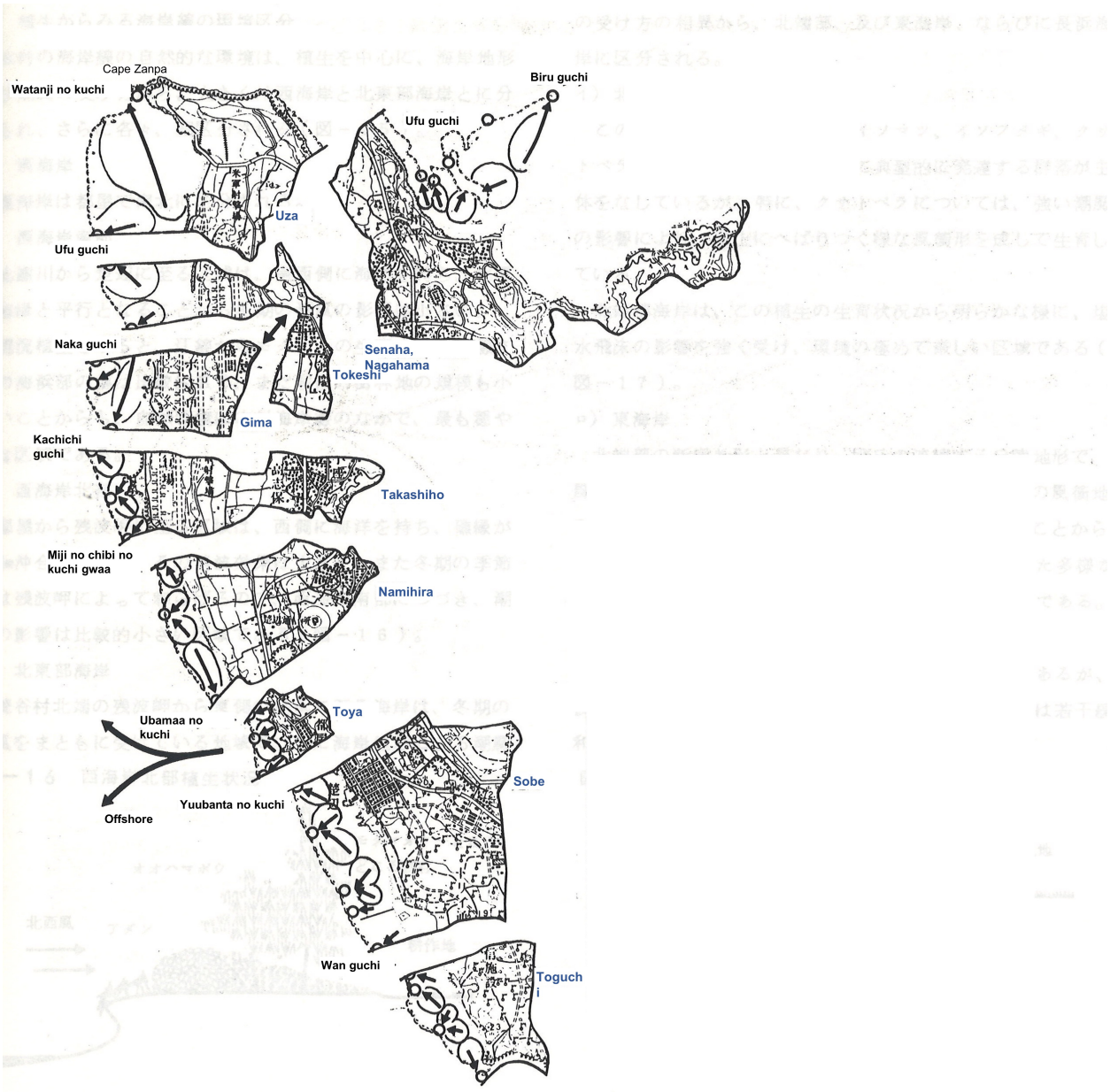

Figure 7. Names for fishing sites and *mura/aza* boundaries. Source: *Yomitan-son kaigansen hozen riyō keikaku chōsa hōkokusho* (Yomitan-son Yakuba Kikaku-ka 1980).

In the late 1860s, there was a shift in political control from Satsuma to Meiji, reflecting the regime change of the Meiji Restoration in Japan. However, this event did not bring immediate change in traditional land use because of land-centered projects employed by the Meiji government. After the annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom, Japan's Meiji government enacted the Preservation of Old Customs Policy (J: *kyūkan onzon seisaku* 旧慣温存政策;

hereafter, the Preservation Policy) (Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). This policy aimed to preserve the customary landholding system's administrative structures and taxation, while preventing commoners from owning land (Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). While the Preservation Policy retained the traditional community settlement for a while, subsequent execution of the Land Reorganization Project (J: *tochi seiri jigyō* 土地整理事業) carried out from 1899 to 1903 changed the local government system and consolidated administrative functions of Okinawa under the Japanese system.

The authors of the prefectural history compilation *Okinawa kenshi* stress the significance of the Land Reorganization Project in three important areas. First, the Land Reorganization allowed private ownership of land, and individual landowners became subject to taxation (Okinawa-ken 1977, 429). Second, private land ownership facilitated the development of individualized economic units, and the economy of Okinawan society became incorporated into the Japanese capitalist system (Okinawa-ken 1977, 433). Third, the Reorganization Project laid the foundation for the unification of the administrative system under Imperial Japan (Okinawa-ken 1977, 434). As part of this strategy, the Meiji government enforced military conscription of the people of Okinawa Prefecture in 1898 (Okinawa-ken 1977, 435).[11]

Complementing the Land Reorganization Project, the establishment of a new government system incorporated the administrative functions of Okinawa into the Japanese system. The implementation of the Okinawa Prefectural Islands Municipality Organization Policy (J: *Okinawa-ken tōsho chō-son sei* 沖縄県島嶼町村制) in 1908 changed Yuntanja *majiri* to Yuntanzan-*son*, and *mura* became *aza* (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 64). Ryukyuan *mura* were newly revised as administrative units of *aza*, yet sustained their previous organization and functions. Additionally, some *yaadui* communities such as Oyashi and Makibaru formed as new *aza* in Yomitan upon the establishment of Okinawa Prefecture (Heibonsha 2002). Despite this top-down change in the land ownership system, peoplehood matrices were maintained because traditional settlement of *mura* had fostered a solid cultural and spiritual relationship of communities with the land.

[11] In Miyako and Yaeyama, people were exempted from conscription until the poll tax system was abolished, and the land reform was completed.

In and Out: The Great Depression and Emigration

When Okinawa Prefecture became fully incorporated into the Imperial Japanese system after the Land Reorganization Project and the establishment of municipalities, the peak of the economic boom during the First World War had already passed, and the Japanese economy was heading towards the Great Depression (Asato et al. 2004). The Okinawan economy suffered adverse effects from the declining price of sugar, which was Okinawa's main export item (Asato et al. 2004). At that time, brown sugar production comprised about seventy percent of Okinawa's sugar industry (Asato et al. 2004). Brown sugar in Okinawa was traditionally manufactured manually by small cooperative work groups of farmers. With time, these agrarian groups began to supply sugar companies. For example, in 1912, the establishment of a large sugar factory owned by Okitai Takushoku Seitō Gaisha (later absorbed by Tainan Seitō Kabushiki Gaisha) in the neighboring town of Kadena contributed to transforming Yomitan villagers' work (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999; Matsumura 2015). Rather than self-manufacturing brown sugar (J: *ganmitsutō*) at a sugar house, *Saataayaa*, in their community, more Yomitan villagers began selling raw materials to produce *bumitsutō* (J: crude sugar to be refined to white sugar) at the sugar factory (Kina-shi Henshū Iinkai 1998, 150; Matsumura 2015). Moreover, a new variety of sugar cane produced and disseminated by sugar factories eventually reduced and replaced the production of "Yuntanzan-*shu*" (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 181).

While the economic recession after World War I affected all of Japan, the collapse of the price of agricultural products imposed additional damage on rural agrarian communities. The impact of the prolonged recession was so severe that the prefectural economy was virtually devastated. The citizens suffered great distress, tax delinquency increased, and salary payments were delayed (Asato et al. 2004). Severe poverty in rural communities pushed people into child trafficking and to eating the poisonous sago palm (O: *suutiichaa*) to avoid starvation. Due to the adverse situation, this period is locally known as *sotetsu jigoku*—"sago palm hell" (Asato et al. 2004; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

The commodification of land through the Land Reorganization Project also meant the commodification of labor. With the abolishment of the communal landholding system, the flow of people and labor increased. The growth of overseas emigration is one example. In 1899, when the Land Reorganization started, the first batch of 27 emigrants was sent to Hawai'i. In the 1900s, the average number of emigrants reached 1,200 a year and 1,750 in the 1910s (Asato et

al. 2004, 281; Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai Shiryō Henshūshitsu 2011). Seeking opportunities to realize economic success, Okinawans immigrated not only to Hawai‘i but also to South America and the Pacific Islands. In five years between 1925 and 1930, the number of Okinawan emigrants reached 15,587 (Asato et al. 2004, 281; Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai Shiryō Henshūshitsu 2011).

In Okinawa, social factors such as the abolishment of collective landholdings, an economic recession, the promotion of migration, and military draft evasion influenced the increase in Okinawan emigration (Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai Shiryō Henshūshitsu 2011, 473). At the *aza* level, emigration consisted of individuals rather than families. For example, from *aza* Sobe, one individual migrated to Peru in 1908 (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 70). In many cases, first emigrants were expected to leave home temporarily for work and come back to their home community. While individual emigration did not seem to have a tremendous impact in the formation of *aza* at home, the remittance and success stories that emigrants brought back home from overseas contributed to the increase of migration applicants (Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai Shiryō Henshūshitsu 2011, 336). Now, municipality or *aza*-level communities formed by *Uchinaanchu* (O: Okinawans) in diaspora maintain and re-build these connections with home communities in Okinawa and develop networks with other diasporic communities, as I described at the beginning of this chapter (Okinawa-ken Bunka Shinkōkai 2011, 392). Peoplehood matrices traveled out of Okinawa with the hope to maintain the balance of the intertwined core elements, and thrived in the diaspora. Although transformations of peoplehood matrices are diverse and complicated across diasporic locale, *Uchinaanchu*'s longing for restoring and optimizing the matrices are made visible with events like the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival.

Meanwhile, in Okinawa, a new political structure slowly affected forms of traditional settlement. The flow of people and wartime projects by colonial empires significantly contributed to transform Okinawa from an internal colony to a military space that threaten to dissolve the Okinawan peoplehood matrices on their native land.

Japanization and the Formation of Military Space

As the Meiji government of the Great Japanese Empire began expanding its colonial territories in East Asia, amidst economic and political modernization, deliberate Japanization proceeded to engulf its "internal" colonies such as Okinawa and Hokkaido. The Great Japanese

Empire emphasized developing a territorially-unified national identity, positioning the Imperial Family as a symbol of the Japanese nation (Okinawa-ken 1977). Moreover, Imperial Japan adopted the policy of strengthening of the military while forcing their populace, including in the colonies, to pledge loyalty to the Emperor (Okinawa-ken 1977). The Imperial Rescript on Education (J: *kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語) taught students that sacrificing one's life for the Emperor was the supreme ethic (Okinawa-ken 1977). The Japanization of Okinawans was strongly encouraged through the implementation of an imperialist education, which included a prohibition on speaking Indigenous languages and the promulgation of Japanese as "the national language" (Asato et al. 2004; Okinawa-ken 1977). Assimilationist policies also extended to simplifying Okinawan customs and ceremonies and to changing Okinawan last names to Japanese style ones (Asato et al. 2004; Okinawa-ken 1977). Loyalty to the Japanese Emperor was absolute. As Japan continued winning its battles with China and Russia, national pride strengthened. In December 1941, the Imperial Japanese Army attacked Pearl Harbor and started the Pacific War.

WWII Japanese Military Occupation

The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters began building up its military bases in Okinawa in 1943 with the aim of supporting Japanese air troops fighting in Chuuk and the Mariana Islands (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 220). In June 1943, red flags were posted in the upland fields across *aza* Zakimi, Kina, Iramina, Sobe, and Namihira in Yomitan Village (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 223). About a week later, officials of the Japanese Army gathered residents and related landowners in a school and informed them of a plan for airfield construction in Yomitan (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The landowners, who were forced to evacuate the construction area, struggled to find a new place to live and farm. They were internally displaced from their homeland (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1992, 50).

Beginning at the end of July, local contractors started the construction of the Yomitan Airfield (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). This urgent construction task of crushing rocks to create the flat airfield surface required great numbers of laborers. Five to six thousand villagers were mobilized to work hard for eleven hours a day (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 222). Because most men had already been drafted into the military, many construction workers were women

(Okinawa-ken 1977, 864). By the time the Battle of Okinawa began, fifteen airfields had been built in Okinawa Prefecture (see fig. 7; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

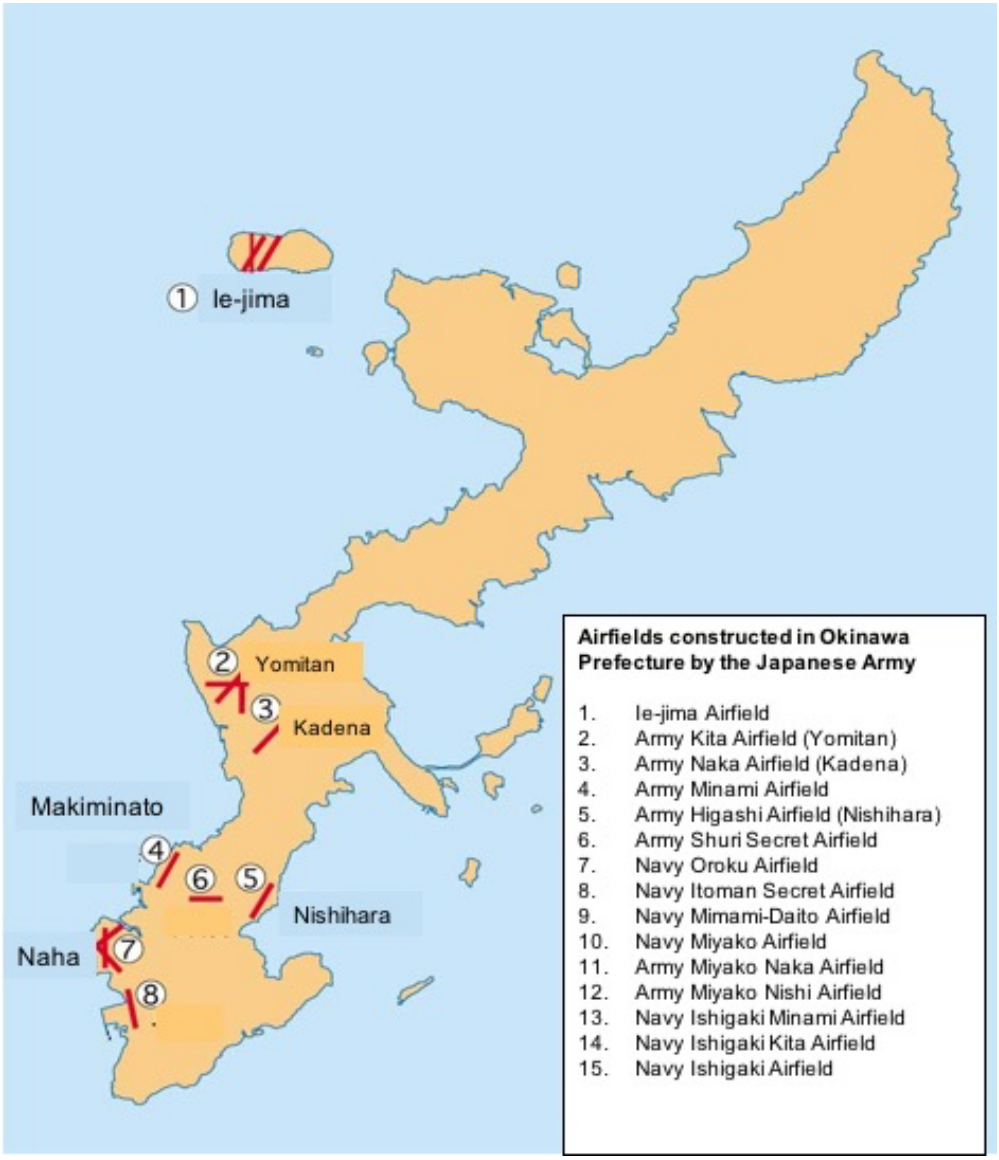

Figure 8. Map of the airfields constructed by the Japanese Imperial Army. Number 9 to 15 are on islands not depicted on this map. Source: Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008.

From the summer of 1944, the Japanese Army troops gradually arrived and were stationed in Okinawa (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). Schools, public halls, and even private houses became military facilities. With the implementation of the National Mobilization Law, residents were forced to cooperate in constructing military facilities, providing food to troops,

and serving in units such as the Student Corps and Nursing Corps (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

In July 1944, when the US military advancement to Okinawa became inevitable, the Japanese government planned to evacuate 100,000 people including seniors, women, and children out of Okinawa within a month (Okinawa-ken 1977, 866). Before the US Army's landing on Okinawa Island, approximately 80,000 people had been evacuated from the island while approximately 390,000 people remained (Okinawa-ken 1977, 866). On October 10, 1944, the US military bombed the island. Unsurprisingly, the airfield in Yomitan was considerably damaged. Ongoing air raids contributed to further damage of the Okinawan Islands.

By February 10, 1945, due to the urgent situation of the war, Yomitan Village decided to evacuate villagers to Kunigami Village in the northern part of Okinawa Island (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). In northern Okinawa, refugees from central and southern Okinawa were allocated temporary living areas according to their home villages (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 223; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). However, concern over moving to an unfamiliar place was so great that many of the Yomitan villagers only began evacuating when the US battle ships started shooting at the village on March 24 (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). Even then, there were also many people who decided to remain in the village (Okinawa-ken 1977, 873; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008; Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969). Many elders, mothers with infants, and small children from the village hid in caves (O: *gama*) and a family tomb (O/J: *haka*) to avoid the fighting (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

On April 1, 1945, the US Army began landing on the Toguchi coast of Yomitan. They were aiming to take over the Yomitan and Kadena Japanese Army airfields, to divide the island between the north and south, and to make the central part of the island into a strategic base for attacking mainland Japan (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 220). While the US Army landed on the island after intense naval bombardment from the coast, the Japanese Army had already withdrawn to southern Okinawa, so the US military occupied both airfields as soon as they landed in Yomitan (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The US Army, while continuing ground warfare after the invasion, quickly occupied Yomitan Village and built Bolo Point Airfield to house B-29 Superfortress bombers, a logistics base, a supply depot, a camp, a hospital and other facilities (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The US military detained soldiers in Prisoner of War (POW) camps and Okinawan residents in Displaced Person (DP) camps set up throughout the island. Within a few days after landing, approximately 6,000 people from central Okinawa were

captured and taken into DP camps (Okinawa-ken 1977, 878). By the end of the battle, the number of Okinawans who were detained in camps increased to 196,000 (Okinawa-ken 1977, 901). The US Army set up a temporary camp for villagers in Sobe, Yomitan. Villagers who were captured by the Army were detained in the Sobe camp and later sent away to camps set up in various places on the island (Okinawa-ken 1977, 878).

(Post)war and Village Reconstruction

Soon after the US military landed on Okinawa Island, the US Navy issued the Nimitz Proclamation No.1 and established the US Military Government (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The US Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands (1945–1950) occupied the islands located south of 29 degrees north latitude and suspended the administrative and judicial powers of the Japanese government in these areas (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The US military secured military bases by enclosing as much of the land as possible, including the Yomitan and Kadena airfields constructed by the Japanese Army (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). Yomitan Village, which was the site of the first landing of the US Army, became the disembarkation point for US military supplies during the battle (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). In 1946, the US military occupied approximately 95 percent of Yomitan Village (see fig. 8; Kobashigawa 2006).

Figure 9. Map of Yomitan Village as of 1946. The US military occupied 95 percent of the land. The white area was the only place released for villagers. Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

On June 23, 1945, Japanese Lieutenant General Ushijima Mitsuru committed suicide in Mabuni in southern Okinawa, ending organized combat (Okinawa-ken 1977, 899). The ground battle, which lasted three months, significantly transformed the landscape of Okinawa Island. Vast areas of the home villages of Okinawans were turned into military bases. There was little to no land for native people who returned to Yomitan from DP camps (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 68). The military occupation of the virtually all of the village area delayed the return of Yomitan villagers to their homeland for several months (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 68). In April 1946, with villagers still in the camps, Chibana Eikō was appointed as the first Mayor of Yomitan Village after the battle. Chibana made a plea for villagers' return, kept in touch with villagers in camps, and led preparations for the resettlement (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 68).

In August 1946, the US military finally permitted Yomitan villagers to return to their homeland (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 68). In order to reconstruct the home village, villagers formed a group called *Yuntanzan-son-kensetsu-tai* 読谷山村建設隊 (J: Yuntanzan Village

Construction Team). The area they were allowed to return to was only five percent of the village land mass of *aza* Namihira and Takashiho (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 68). The Yomitan Village Office was set up in *aza* Namihira and prepared for the resettlement of *aza* communities. The then-mayor appointed a representative for each *aza* and coordinated postwar administrative affairs (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). On November 20, 1946, the first batch of about 5,000 villagers moved back to their homeland (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 77). The Construction Team staffed people in the administrative, economic, and educational institutions that are important for governance such as a municipal office, agricultural co-op, *aza* communities, and schools, and solidified the basis for village reconstruction (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 69). The Team planned mass transfers of villagers and carried these out step by step in five batches for two years until 14,000 villagers had been resettled in the small area of Yomitan that had been released (see fig. 8; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008; Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969,78). For villagers who survived the battle, the presence of US military bases was daunting; they had to work to win back bits of soil little by little in order to secure the land to live on.

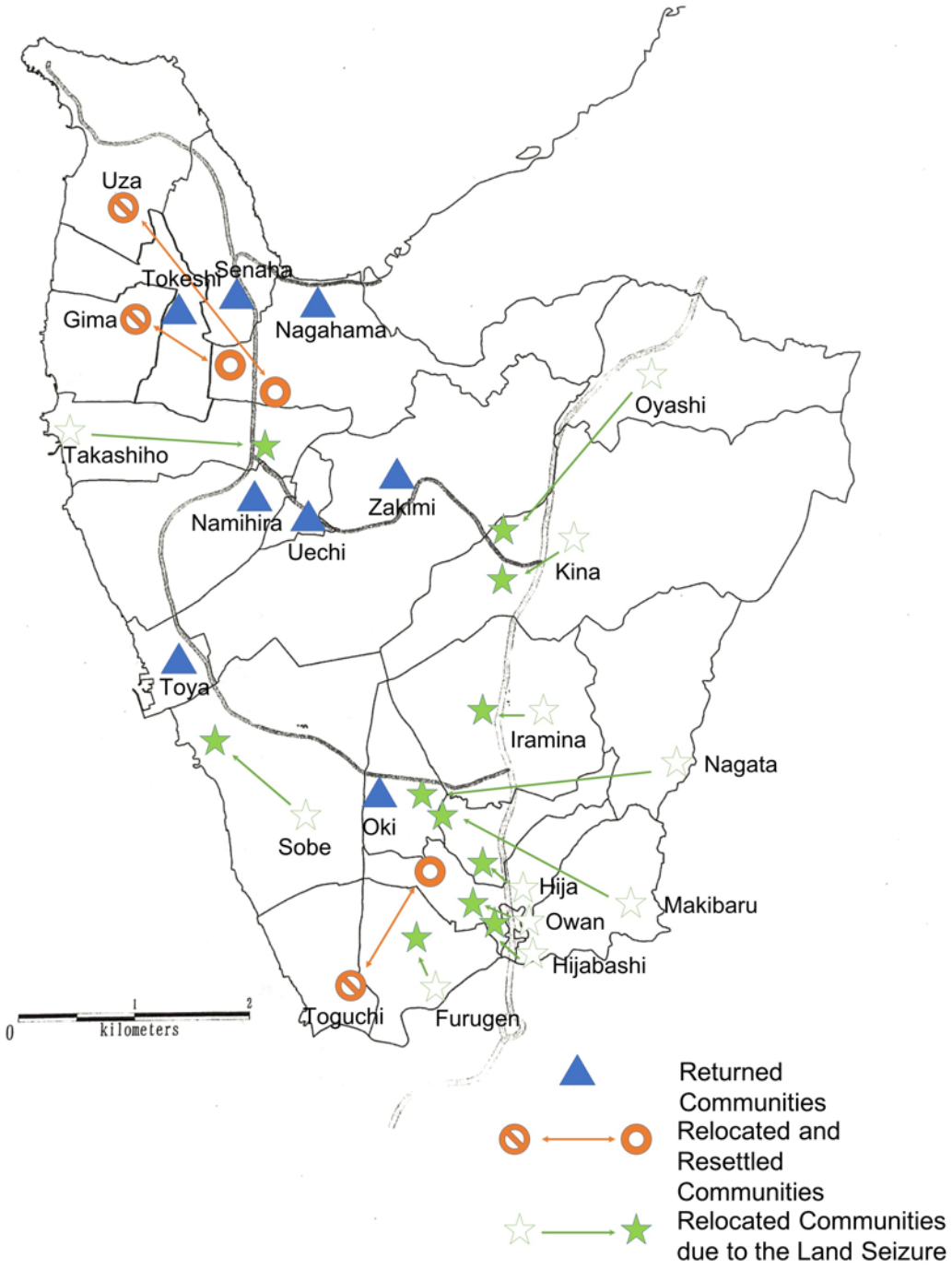

Figure 10. Map of displaced, returned, and relocated *aza* in Yomitan.

Return, Resettlement, and Disrupted Peoplehood

Figure 9 shows a map of displaced, returned, and relocated *aza* in Yomitan. Blue triangles indicate *aza* that returned to the original settlement after community members were released from DP camps. An orange circle with a line through it indicates *aza* that were displaced and relocated in another site, then later returned back to a prewar settlement area for resettlement. Green stars mark *aza* that were relocated to a new place because of the seizure of prewar settlement area by the US military. Symbols point to the location where community halls (J: *aza kōminkan*) were placed.

The resettlement and reorganization of social life in Uza provides an example of how peoplehood matrices in Yomitan sustained their presence and functions despite the land seizure and occupation by the US military. At the time that Uza villagers were released from DP camps, the Bolo Airfield of the US Army was being built in the former Uza settlement area. Uza people then temporarily resettled in Takashiho. While residents of other *aza* were able to return to their former settlements, community groups like Uza and Gima remained in the Takashiho area. Many villagers engaged in labor at military bases to earn cash and farmed provided community plots or tilled the soil of "militarily occupied" areas (Nakata 2015).

Although the Uza people returned to Yomitan Village, their former community became the Bolo Airfield and later became a live firing range. Seeking space to create a new hub for community reconstruction, the Uza community built a community hall (J: *aza kōminkan*) in a new place (current *aza* Nagahama) in 1952 (Nakata 2015; Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). Centering on and surrounding the community hall, Uza people built their houses one after another, and a new Uza community settlement was formed in the border between the *aza* Nagahama and *aza* Takashiho. In 1965, the Uza people built a monument in Nagahama to commemorate the war dead from the Uza community. In 1976, the US military made restitution of the Bolo Airfield, which had occupied approximately 88 percent of the land of the Uza community (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). After infrastructure building was completed in 1984, the Uza people were finally allowed to return to their "homeland" (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). Consequently, postwar *aza* Uza developed in two geographical areas within Yomitan. While some community events such as a sports festival are held in the "former" Uza community, other events including a memorial

service are held in the "new" space where the postwar Uza community hall and monument were constructed (Nakata 2015; Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014).

As we can see from the case of the Uza community, peoplehood matrices in rural Okinawa physically and psychologically developed and sustained their functions based on land and kinship (Nakachi 1989). Some families in the community are known as descendants of the founders of a peoplehood matrix from the Ryukyu Kingdom era or earlier, and their ancestral lineages are honored by the community (Nakachi 1989; Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). Through war and military occupation, the Uza community lost one of the core elements of the peoplehood matrix: the land. However, the community members sustained themselves strongly and as they struggled to return to their ancestral land.

The Cold War and the Separation of Okinawa as a "Military Colony"

As tension between the United States and the Soviet Union grew, the United States positioned Okinawa as a strategic base in the Far East. When the Korean War began in 1950, the US military in Okinawa intensified its operations. The United States began to seize forcibly additional lands that had been previously released to Okinawa residents, in order to expand its military bases.

In 1951, the Japanese and US governments concluded the San Francisco Peace Treaty that made Japan independently and actively support the US military's Far East strategy (Asato et al. 2004, 307). Article 3 of the Treaty partitioned Okinawa from Japan and placed it under the administration of the United States. Both the Japanese and US governments crushed Okinawans' desire to return to Japan (Asato et al. 2004, 307). Since then, Okinawa has called April 28, the day on which the Peace Treaty came into force, the "Day of Humiliation" (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). According to Article 3 of the Peace Treaty, the islands south of 29 degrees north latitude which include Amami Island and Okinawa Island, were removed from Japanese administration (Asato et al. 2004). In Okinawa, rule by the US military continued for 27 years until May 15, 1972. Meanwhile, during the US occupation, military fortification increased, including the relocation of the US Army and Marine Corps bases from mainland Japan to Okinawa (Yara 2009, 82).

Land Seizure, Displacement, and Community Resettlement

After the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect, the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) promulgated Ordinance No. 91 *Authority to*

Contract and tried to secure continued use of the land through lease contracts (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 82). However, the lease term was as long as twenty years, while the annual rent for one *tsubo* (35 square feet) was only two cents (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006). In 1953, USCAR promulgated Ordinance No. 109 *Land Acquisition Procedure* and began forcible land seizures in various places such as Mawashi, Mekaru, Gushi (in Naha City), Ginowan, Isahama (in Ginowan City), and Maja (in Ie Island) (Asato et al. 2004; Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

While Okinawan residents persistently and nonviolently opposed land seizures, many communities besides Sobe were forced to relocate. The US military, armed with bayonets, crushed houses and bulldozed cultivated farmland (Asato et al. 2004; Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006, 63). Moreover, the US military fired warning shots at farmers who would not stop farming, spread gasoline on farmlands and burned crops (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006). Farmers from Ie Island decided to protest and carried out a "Beggars' March" to cross Okinawa Island while appealing the land seizure situation of Ie Island. In June 1956, the USCAR issued the Melvin Price Report, which recommended further land purchases and a permanent militarization of Okinawa (Asato et al. 2004; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The report galvanized the sense of crisis among Okinawans and triggered a majority of them to join in a demilitarization movement, which is locally known as "the island-wide struggles" (J: *shima gurumi tōsō* 島ぐるみ闘争) (Asato et al. 2004; Tanji 2006; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

In response to the island-wide movement, the USCAR used a "carrots and sticks" strategy. The USCAR established an off-limits policy in the central region, which negatively affected the local businesses that depended on the military-related economy because soldiers could no longer spend money in the region. Moreover, the USCAR switched the currency from the military B yen to US dollars (Asato et al. 2004; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). Meanwhile, the USCAR supported the rehabilitation of Okinawan society through infrastructure building, provision of educational facilities and supplies, and other activities. This military strategy roughly bisected Okinawans into one group willing to compromise because of economic dependence on the US military and another that aimed to be liberated from US military rule.

In Yomitan, *aza* Sobe and *aza* Toguchi became the subjects of forced displacement. After a part of the *aza* Sobe community was released by the military in November 1946, the Sobe people moved from *aza* Namihira to their "former" Sobe area lands (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai

1999). In 1949, *aza* Sobe increased community administration including electing officers, building a community hall (J: *kōminkan*), and organizing community events (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). In May 1956, however, the Office of the Land Division of USCAR notified the Sobe people that they had to leave their land (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). The Sobe community held a meeting every day to discuss the issue and decided not to accept the eviction order because they believed that leaving their ancestral land would result in great misery (Aza Sobe-shi 1999, 101). The Sobe people decided to remain and continued to send oral and written petitions to the government. Meanwhile, the US military carried out a land survey, and construction of Torii Communication Station began on the east side of the Sobe area (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). The Sobe people were eventually forced to move from the place, gave up resisting, and began to consider the conditions of displacement and resettlement (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). The Sobe community itself redistributed the new land released by the military and implemented resettlement of their own people. Thirty-one households requested to move out of *aza* Sobe, and the other 380 households settled on the west side of Sobe (O: *mii-Subi*) (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999; more in Chapter 4).

For the Sobe community, this displacement meant another stage in the loss of the land and control of their peoplehood matrix. Physical and material loss and reduction of living space crammed houses together and pushed some people away to Yaeyama and Bolivia (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). While the new settlement was planned and arranged neatly based on land surveys, the community's access to many of communal water wells (O: *kaa*), sacred worship sites (O: *uganju*) and a site of bountiful sea resources, *inoo*, was restricted. The USCAR did not pay any compensation for the loss of *aza* Sobe. However, the Sobe people later claimed their right for compensation and received the payment three years after their resettlement (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 105). Moreover, the Sobe people demanded the US Army to permit villagers' farming of the area that they do not use (more in Chapter 4). Resettlement of *aza* Sobe was, as the Sobe people describes, a start of "new" Sobe (O: *mii-Subi*) while holding their disrupted peoplehood matrix tightly in their thoughts and actions.

While the USCAR's tactics tried to sway the sociopolitical atmosphere in Okinawa, the island-wide struggle in the late 1950s, successive negative incidents, accidents by soldiers, storage of nuclear weapons, and other kinds of suppression of Okinawan civilians further provoked political tensions and Okinawan antagonism toward military occupation (Asato et al.

2004; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). In 1960, the Council for Okinawa Prefecture Reversion to Japan (J: *Fukki Kyō* 復帰協) was formed (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). At the time of the inauguration, the Council formulated their goals to abolish the Security Treaty, while achieving greater autonomy, and Okinawa's reversion to a "home country" (Asato et al. 2004; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). The presence of the US military during the Vietnam War influenced Okinawans to believe that Okinawa residents participated indirectly in the war (Tanji 2006; Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008). The goal of Okinawan activism gradually shifted to include anti-war ideology and a peace movement. From 1968 onward, activists demanded immediate and unconditional restitution of military land to Okinawa (Yomitan-son Yakuba 2008).

On May 15, 1972, Okinawa's reversion to Japan became a reality. However, there was a significant gap between the return of Okinawa that the Japanese and US governments had planned and the reversion that Okinawan residents had envisioned. Against Okinawans' expressed wishes, both governments kept the US military presence on Okinawa, maintaining the geopolitically strategic site, "the Keystone of the Pacific," and applying the Japan-US Security Treaty (ANPO) to Okinawa.

Contrary to the Okinawan wish for reversion without military bases or nuclear weapons under Japan's Peace Constitution, violence and long-term control over land and people have continued. Then-Governor of Okinawa Prefecture, Yara Chōbyō, positioned solving the military issue as the most critical task of the prefectural government because this issue was important to many Okinawans who had shared terrible experiences during the war (Asato et al. 2004). However, the military occupation of Okinawa has continued, not only with the persistent presence of the US military, but also with the arrival of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (Asato et al. 2004). Although the US military bases in Okinawa were consolidated to some extent in the 1970s and 1980s, only 15 percent of the land was returned, and 75 percent of the US military bases hosted by Japan are concentrated in Okinawa (Asato et al. 2004).

As of May 1972, the US military occupied approximately 73 percent of Yomitan Village with eleven military facilities (see fig. 10; Kobashigawa 2006).

1. Bolo Airfield (293.61 ha.)
2. Senaha Communication Site (61.7 ha.)
3. Yomitan Auxiliary Facility (12.20 ha.)
4. Sobe Direction Finding System West Site (2.33 ha.)
5. Namihira Army Auxiliary Facility (5.9 ha.)
6. Oki Site (5.39 ha.)
7. Sobe Communication Site (53.5 ha.)
8. Yomitan Auxiliary Airfield (473 ha.)
9. Torii Communication Station (332 ha.)
10. Kadena Residential Area (10.3 ha.)
11. Kadena Ammunition Storage Area (1,271 ha.)

Figure 11. List of eleven US military facilities in Yomitan as of May 1972.

Figure 12. Map of Yomitan Village as of 1972. The US military occupied 73 percent of the land. The dark side is the military (Kobashigawa 2006).

Yomitan Village's first step toward self-governance and was to regain and secure physically, culturally, and spiritually well-balanced living space for villagers after 27 years of military occupation. In 1974, Yamauchi Tokushin became the Mayor of Yomitan Village. As a former high school social science teacher, Yamauchi strongly believed in the importance of the Peace Constitution and determined to create a democratic self-governing community which exercised Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, renouncing armed forces with war potential (Yamauchi 2011, 2014). As he led the post-reversion government, Yamauchi employed the rich culture of peoplehood matrices in Yomitan as a base for his policy of demilitarized administration. He initiated collaborative planning and governance by sharing visions with each *aza* to administrate the village. Yamauchi's charismatic leadership, village-wide protests against military occupation, and *aza* resilience eventually achieved successful repossession of the land by the Yomitan people (Tanji 2009, 2011; and more in Chapter 2). As Figure 12 shows below, most of the military space was returned after Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration. Currently, the militarized space in Yomitan Village has decreased to 36 percent of the village lands. The next chapter describes how his leadership and the villagers' participation in self-governance successfully reduced the military occupation and (re)created an Indigenous space.

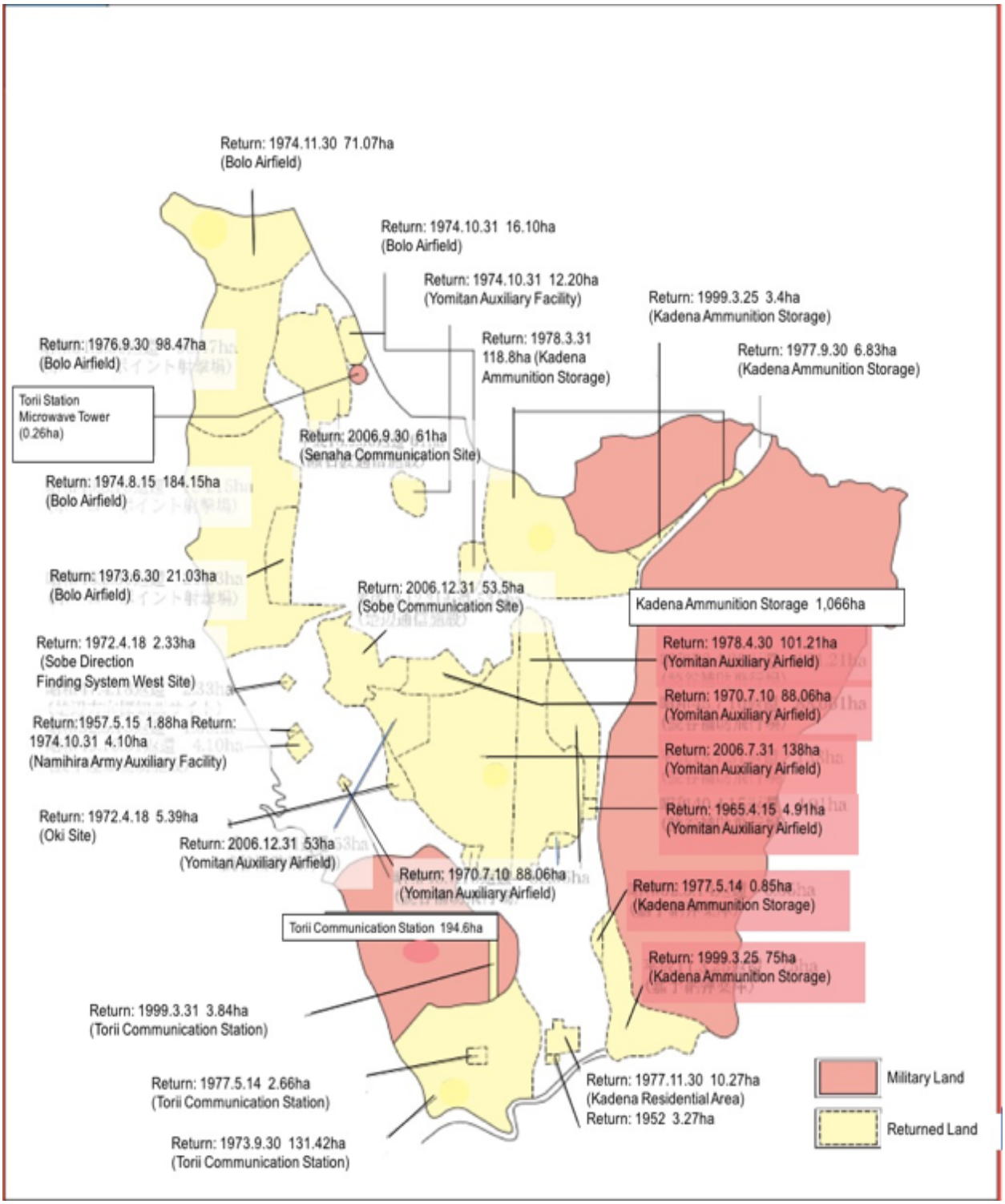

Figure 13. Map of returned land after military use. The red part is the area currently occupied by the US military, and the yellow part is the land returned by the military use after 1972.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced the historical formation of settler colonial and military space in Okinawa. I also incorporated descriptions of peoplehood matrices in Yomitan to illustrate traditional settlements, displacement, mobilization, and resettlement, along with crucial political and structural changes. As argued in the previous chapter, the limitations of a rights-based approach to Indigenous self-determination are linked with the state's hesitation to recognize Indigenous peoples as such (Baird 2015; Corntassel 2003). However, unrecognized Indigeneity is not equivalent to the absence of a settler colonial structure. Rather, it is a feature of the colonial logic. David Lloyd and Patrick Wolfe (2016) argue against any limited understanding of settler colonialism as confined to the "early stages of colonial-capitalist expansion," and instead, they demonstrate that the structure of settler colonialism continues through renewed forms of primitive accumulation, military occupation, and a neoliberal regime. Lorenzo Veracini (2011, 8) also stresses how settler colonialism keeps erasing Indigenous peoples through "the domestication of indigenous sovereignties for the benefit of the settler state." In Yomitan, settler colonial and military mechanisms and installations disrupted peoplehood paradigms and undermined self-governing Indigenous entities with a concept of a modern, state-centered form of sovereignty.

As I argue for the continuity of Okinawa culture despite the settler colonial and military space demands of the Japanese and US empires, I also set the groundwork for exploring native narratives in later chapters. This expression of Indigenous continuity that I provide covers a range of place-based stories, memories, and practices. Glen Coulthard (2007, 456) urges Indigenous peoples who are caught in the politics of recognition to act: "[T]hose struggling against colonialism must 'turn away' from the colonial state and society and find in their own transformative praxis the source of their liberation." The following chapters highlight practices that sustain our own understanding of Okinawan Indigeneity, responsible self-determination, and Indigenous resurgence of and on our land.

CHAPTER 2

An Artful Way of Making Indigenous Space

In 1995, the Okinawan community of Yomitan revealed their plans for the future of their village (Yomitan-son 1995). The village had lost land previously during the Pacific War when the Japanese built an airfield. Community leaders placed an image and a poem at the center of this new vision, an artful way of imagining Indigenous space (see fig. 14).

Yutasa aru funshii	The richness of nature
Masaru chimugukuru	Good hearted people
Sachifukuru hana ya	The culture, shining with all its glory
Mura nu miati	is the guideline of the village

Figure 14. The Phoenix Plan for Yomitan Village. Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

According to this vision, known as the Phoenix Plan (J: *ōtori keikaku* 鳳計画), the cape of Yomitan is imagined to be a phoenix about to take off towards the East China Sea. The Yomitan Hills and Takō Mountain become wings with flying capability. Holding a lei of corals in its beak, the Phoenix welcomes *kariyushi* (O: prosperity) arriving from *nirai kanai*, the faraway land across the sea from whence, according to traditional Okinawan belief, happiness comes. The energy of *hito* (J: people), *mono* (J: goods), and *bunka* (J: culture) flows into the center, swirls like a windmill and generates energy (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013a). Drawing from a philosophy of *feng shui*, which represents the interconnectedness of communities with nature, Yomitan envisions the resurgence of the village, rising again like a phoenix. Reinforcing the visual imagination, the accompanying poem, written in the 8-8-8-6 style common to Ryukyuan poetry (O/J: *ryūka* 琉歌), suggests that following the "guidelines of the village (O: *mura nu miati*)" this artfully constructed space of nature-people-culture, will result in "a healthy community (O: *ganjuu nu shima*)."[12]

In 1995, the village government of Yomitan adopted this Phoenix Plan based on Indigenous community orientations and has continued to use it as the groundwork for the local government planning (Yomitan-son 1995). The municipality incorporated the principle into its master plan, and the Phoenix became a new icon to symbolize the village and its vision of the landscape. Continuing to guide current community-building efforts in Yomitan, the phoenix with its autochthonous wings of mountains works to slowly repossess bits of farmland, reclaiming them from their designation as Japanese (and later, US) military airstrips.

This chapter explores the emergence of Indigenous space in Yomitan Village, Okinawa. I discuss Okinawan Indigeneity by examining the land disputes of the Yomitan Airfield. Debates and disputes over the use of the Yomitan Airfield have long revolved in a circuit of Indigenous struggles for land rights, political autonomy, and a culturally (and ethically) appropriate form of governance. While the global circulation of Indigenous rights discourse sounds appealing and promising, and I comment on it throughout this dissertation, as Jeff Corntassel (2008, 2012) has shown, an overly-tight focus on the language of rights often belies local agency as expressed through acts of land care "responsibility." Thus, rather than focusing on social movements and

[12] Indeed, the last line of the poem was changed from "*Mura nu miati* (O: is the guideline of the village)" to "*Ganjuu nu shima* (O: is a healthy community)" in 2008 (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013a).

identity politics of Okinawans (as Indigenous or not, for instance), instead, I explore the complex nature of Indigeneity via peoples' everyday relationship to the land in Okinawa. Through an examination of micro-level politics and peoplehood matrices (O: *aza*), I argue that Yomitan village leaders' rhetoric of governing memberships, rights, and authorities works to reconceptualize Indigeneity under a contemporary legal framework of land management.

Thinking through trans-Pacific circuits of diasporic organizing (Okinawans in Hawai'i, for instance) and intensively local attempts at spatial organizing (the Yomitan area *aza*), I define Okinawa as a settler-military locale (Nebolon 2017a, 2017b). This is by virtue both of Japanese annexation (and largely invisibilized "internal" colonization) and the militarization of land holdings by the US armed forces under the Security Treaty (ANPO). This chapter highlights the ways in which Indigeneity is being used as a translocal tool of political organizing and resistance, in which local organizers and leaders can ground globally circulating discourse on Indigenous rights in order to exert pressure on the state for the purposes of gaining community recognition, acknowledgement of cultural distinctiveness, and (at least limited) land use rights.

In this chapter, I examine both external and internal forces that have encouraged and obstructed efforts to mobilize native people over their use of land. Conflicts over land in Okinawa are not homogenous. The Okinawan struggle for land is multi-layered in ways that challenge and empower people to reinvigorate Indigenous space. On many occasions, Indigenous land claims focus too much on who owns the land, who is entitled to it, and who can be defined as the Indigenous people. The result is that other forms of being in the place are left out of the picture, although different modes of engagement with the land have also contributed to our understanding of Indigeneity and been manifested in social movements and rural livelihood.

In Okinawa, autochthonous understandings of communities' connection to the land, cultures, and spiritualties, although still present and active, have been overtaken by a rights-based conception of "Indigenous" and have been replaced by a nation-state projection of land, power, and belonging. Indigenous space, Michael Hathaway (2010, 304) argues, pertains to "the ways that the concept of Indigenous people is engaged with and used in specific locales at specific times." Examination of Indigenous space requires posing questions of "how and why indigeneity becomes relevant or even possible, and how it changes over time" (Hathaway 2010, 304). Following these inquiries, this chapter examines the case of the Yomitan Airfield in Okinawa, considering how Indigenous space has emerged, and the resultant new accounts and

boundary politics of belonging and exclusion created through artful envisionings of Indigenous space.

First, I describe historical organizations and orientations of communities in Yomitan. I discuss what has changed and what has remained stable in terms of social belonging through postwar displacement and relocation. I show that genealogical and cultural connections have played major roles in shaping spatial and political claims to the land in Yomitan. Next, I delve into the trajectory of the land use disputes over the past forty-five years since Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration in 1972. The restoration of the former military airfield that I examine in this chapter highlights internal political tensions under the Japanese state. I illustrate several phases of land claims and examine various strategies that Okinawans have adopted in order to mark, zone, claim, occupy and access the militarized land. Finally, I close by revisiting Okinawan Indigeneity and what it reveals about the process of making Indigenous space. Throughout, I argue that the understanding and use of "Indigeneity" by Okinawans has changed and re-emerged as a new component within international political identification and regarding issues of land ownership, entitlement, and access.

Aza Politics, People, Land, Belonging, and Power

A community is a form of abstract social organizing that develops, evolves, includes and excludes members. The formation of communities engages a number of elements, including people, history, climate, geography, social and political conditions, and legal structures. Therefore, the characteristics of a community are diverse in their orientation, definitions, conditions, and activities. In Japan since 1940, micro-level community organizations called *jichi-kai* 自治会 or *chōnai-kai* 町内会 (J: neighborhood associations) have become institutionalized and unified by the central government through the enactment of community association maintenance policies (Nakachi 1989, 203; Nakata 2017). These policies were implemented by the state for the top-down management of its population and to encourage modernization (Nakachi 1989; Nakata 2017). In mainland Japan, *jichi-kai* (J: neighborhood associations) cover their own territory and population. Membership is based on households rather than individuals. A *jichi-kai* is responsible for a wide variety of activities, ranging from organizing cultural events to providing disaster management assistance (Nakata 2017).

The Okinawan communities discussed in this dissertation are slightly different from Japanese *jichi-kai* and administrative districts in terms of how communities have historically

evolved and survived "diasporically."[13] Okinawan peoplehood matrices are integrally interrelated with the lands of specific villages and locales. Cultural and spiritual connections and attachment to the land are notably strong at a village level. Furthermore, the Okinawan understanding of "community" (O: *shima*)[14] does not correspond with racialized, or affiliation-based organizing like those often found in Western, settler-colonial societies. Thus, though Okinawan Indigeneity has been shaped by multiple waves of displacement (whether Japanese annexation or the US-led militarization of land), the conceptual structure of Indigeneity in Okinawa cannot be understood solely in terms of nativity versus settler colonialism. Nor is Okinawan Indigeneity commensurate with "minority minzu (nationality)" (Yeh 2007, 82; Elliott 2015, 186) or "heritage-resident" (Elliott 2015, 211; Luo 2017, 28) ideas of Indigenous peoples, as articulated by other Asian states. Rather, Okinawan indigeneity hybridizes both models on an intensively local scale that might be termed micro-Indigeneity.

In rural Okinawa, peoplehood matrices under the municipal level have been called *aza* 字, and *aza* is combined with a community name to indicate specific unit. For example, in Yomitan, there are twenty-three peoplehood matrices such as *aza* Sobe, *aza* Kina, and *aza* Zakimi (see fig. 4 in Chapter 1). These *aza* are self-governing entities slightly different from the administrative-based neighborhoods. Some communities own a community hall called *aza kōminkan* 字公民館*,* which serves as a place for the members to gather and hold events and meetings. Most members of a community are the residents, who historically live around the area, their descendants, and newcomers, who have moved into the area by marriage.

Aza serve four main functions. First, an *aza* generates a cultural sense of belonging to the community. In general, the governing body of each *aza* takes responsibility for performing the

[13] I say "diasporically" here because of the history of displacement, endurance, mobilization, and resettlement of communities from the original homeland (see Chapter 1). I also imply the fact that Okinawan diasporic communities in the world (especially in Hawai'i) organize sub-groups and identify their ancestral connections by village-level or *aza*-level communities.

[14] The Okinawan term *shima* has been used equivalently to *aza* and *mura* (Okinawa Daihyakkajiten Kankō Henshūkyoku 1983). After the Japanese government issued the Okinawa Prefectural Islands Municipality Organization Policy (J: *Okinawa-ken tōsho chō-son sei* 沖縄県島嶼町村制) in 1908, a traditional land division and governing unit system *magiri* 間切 (O: *majiri*) became *mura* 村, and the smallest unit *mura* became *aza* 字 (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). In this chapter, I use *aza* because the term is commonly used in Okinawa and connotes an administrative boundary.

traditional ceremonies and rituals of a community. Sacred sites in the area are usually preserved and maintained by representatives and volunteers of the *aza*. Each *aza* also encourages preserving and teaching youth and children folk culture, such as dance, music, and theater that are associated with and unique to a particular place and people. Second, each *aza* functions as a self-governing body. Each community holds events and activities such as a sports day and a clean-up day. Third, the *aza* plays a role as a subsidiary organization of the municipality. Yomitan Village, for instance, delegates administrative tasks to each *aza* community. Fourth, the *aza* serves as an intermediary between community members and the municipality.

Geographic and demographical boundaries between communities are often ambiguous. Some people are members of the community where they grow up. Others join the community organization to which their parents belong, regardless of their own place of current residence. Based on these characteristics, Nakachi Hiroshi (1989) argues that communities in Yomitan are genealogy-based organizations. Each community has slightly different characteristics. The current "genealogy-based" *aza* communities in Yomitan have been disrupted and reconstructed by two historical processes of land grabbing—the Preservation of Old Customs Policy (J: *kyūkan onzon seisaku* 旧慣温存政策) in the early Meiji period and the on-going presence of the US military (Nakachi 1989).

The annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1879 made Okinawa into an internal colony of Japan and placed Okinawans in a "second-class citizen" status. The Preservation Policy was the Meiji government's strategy to delay land reform in Okinawa. Under this policy, the pre-modern system of collective landholding (J: *jiwari seido* 地割制度), taxation, and the Ryukyuan *majiri*[15] governance was maintained. While the Japanese state had carried out land reform in 1873 in the other parts of Japan, the old land tenure system remained in Okinawa until 1903 (Asato et al. 2004; Nakachi 1989; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). In *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*, Wendy Matsumura (2015, 49) describes how the Preservation Policy turned Okinawa into a "domestic site of sugar extraction" to serve the rapid economic development of Japan as a nation-state. While Okinawan farmers

[15] *Majiri* 間切 is a type of administrative district of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Each *majiri* included several villages (O: *mura*) controlled by a local chief *aji* 按司.

were exploited in the system of capitalist accumulation, labor and heavy taxation implanted a sense of "common" responsibility among agrarian villagers (Nakachi 1989).

Comparing various colonial situations in Asia, Tania Li (2010) argues that Indigeneity is a socially constructed concept and co-emerged with capitalism through the process of colonialism. Borrowing Li's perspective, I claim that Indigeneity in Okinawa was constructed by and co-emerged with the Preservation Policy, in which a colonial project by the Japanese state pressured the Okinawan populations to restrict their mobility in a particular geographical area while maintaining the customary tenure system. This intermeshing of Okinawan Indigeneity and Japanese colonialism is not surprising when one considers how the Japanese government simultaneously implemented assimilationist policies and encouraged simplification of Indigenous languages and customs (Asato et al. 2004; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). Therefore, the "Indigeneity" constructed and used to refer to Okinawans at that time was a product of Japan's colonial projects that fixed people in time, representing them as members of a static and stagnant culture.

Moreover, repeated dispossessions and forced dislocations of communities by force have helped to foster a collective spirit and subjectivity for self-governance among villagers. After Japan's surrender in World War II, the administrative rule of Okinawa transferred from Japan to the United States via the Peace Treaty of San Francisco. Establishing the United States Civilian Administration of the Ryukyus (USCAR), the US military took control of and priority over all administrative, legislative and judicial powers in Okinawa. As mentioned earlier, the 1953 *Land Acquisition Procedure* issued by the USCAR forced farmers and landowners to hand over their lands. With the military fortification of the island, Indigenous communities in Okinawa underwent repeated processes of dispossession and repossession of their lands.

In postwar Yomitan, the areas released for residents to return from Displaced Person (DP) camps were limited. Therefore, many dispossessed villagers ended up moving to a neighboring area different from their original settlement. For example, the postwar military occupation made the people of *aza* Uza move to *aza* Takashiho and Nagahama (see fig. 4 and fig. 10 in Chapter 1). While losing physical access to the ancestral land, Uza people built the Uza Community Hall for gathering and maintained a cohesive sense of belonging with the hope of returning to their land in the future (Yomitan-son Kyōiku Iinkai Bunka Shinkōka 2014). The Uza community continued to function as an autonomous body with the authority of this invented

space as known as the "Uza Community Hall." Just like other *aza*, the Uza community organizes traditional ceremonies and community events in their community hall in Nagahama.[16] Ceremonies and rituals held by Uza still value the genealogical connection to the "original" Uza settlement area rather than Nagahama. As a result, in *aza* Nagahama, there are two genealogy-based communities, Nagahama and Uza. In this manner, in Yomitan, the names of *aza* indicate not only places but also groups of people, who identify themselves and trace their ancestral roots to particular places. *Aza* community halls then are considered important as meeting places and spaces in which to exercise governance of the community.

Development of contemporary *aza* communities in Yomitan is complicated locally. This genealogy-based organizing of peoplehood matrices certainly exists as an extension of collective landholdings and major land dispossessions imposed from the outside. This matrix of overlapping community spaces further increases in complexity when other forms of occupying and claiming the space are also considered.

Making Indigenous Space on the Militarized Land

What I refer to as Yomitan Airfield in this chapter is an area located at the center of the village. In the airfield, there was a 1.2-mile-long runway and a one-mile taxiway (Yomitan-son 1983; see fig. 15 and fig. 16). While remnants of the airfield are still there, the area is now open to a vast sky, covered by sugar cane fields, a few blocks of greenhouses, new roads that run by a government office, a public school, and a farmers' market. In 2006, village organizers, including those involved in envisioning the Phoenix Plan, reaped the rewards of long years of community organizing when 191 hectares of the airfield were transferred officially from US military usage and the Japanese government control, and returned to the Okinawan community (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son n.d.). This land restoration achievement reflects for more than sixty years of native struggles over the soil. With the Phoenix vision of Yomitan (see fig. 14), the former airfield is seen in the midst of a significant transformation, a repossession of—and artful re-creation of—Indigenous space. Here, I reconstruct the main steps that Yomitan leaders took over the last half century, steps which ultimately resulted in partial repossession of the airfield.

[16] The Uza Community Hall is located at the boarderline of *aza* Nagahama and *aza* Takashiho.

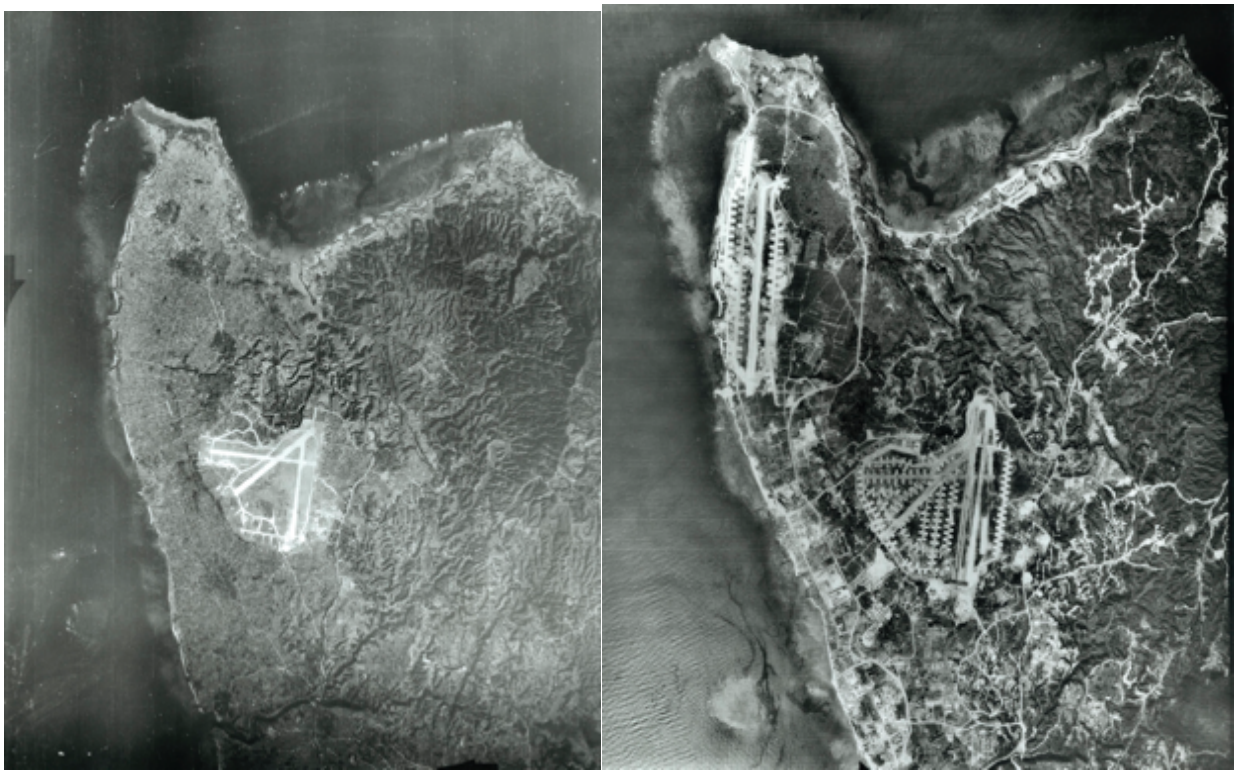

Figure 15. *Left*. An aerial photograph of Yomitan Village taken by the US military on January 3, 1945. The Yomitan Airfield, which the Japanese Imperial Army had prepared to engage the enemy, was located at the center of the village. Photograph Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

Figure 16. *Right*. An aerial photograph of Yomitan Village taken by the US military on December 19, 1945. Eight months after the US military landing on the island, the US military expanded the Yomitan Airfield and also constructed the Bolo Airfield on the coastline. Photograph Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

"Is Yomitan Airfield state land?" As soon as the political regime of Okinawa changed, elders of the *aza* Zakimi community raised the question (Shimabukuro 2010). Upon Okinawa's return to the Japanese administration in 1972, villagers learned that the Yomitan Airfield was registered as a state property, which the US Army was using for parachute training. Under the falling parachutes, villagers were working in the fields growing sugar cane and sweet potatoes. Villagers were bothered by helicopters circling overhead and by the risk of falling objects that had caused fatal accidents in the past (Shimabukuro 2010). Okinawans at that time anchored their hopes on reversion to the Japanese administration which would stop the military occupation and alter control of the island. However, the reversion did not change the situation in a way that many Okinawans wished, at least not for the people from Zakimi, the former landowners and

residents of the Yomitan Airfield. A series of colonial projects on Okinawan land had historically and systematically pushed native people out of their ancestral land for the sake of the Japanese nation-state. Okinawa after the reversion faced many unprecedented issues that raised questions about who was responsible for the displacement and dispossession that happened over the course of the war.

As the title of Yomitan Airfield became a hot topic of conversation among senior residents in the Zakimi community, four men from the community soon volunteered to conduct fact-finding research on whether or not the Yomitan Airfield was state land, and how it had become so (Shimabukuro 2010). These men collected information, interviewed people, and submitted a report to the *aza* Zakimi Community Board. Receiving the report, the Board soon set up a meeting with nineteen representatives from the village assembly, the senior group, the youth group, the women's group, and so on (Shimabukuro 2010). Residents of Zakimi remembered that five *aza*, Zakimi being the largest, had previously occupied the area where the Yomitan Airfield was constructed. On June 12, 1973, the Zakimi Community Board formally inaugurated a coalition to regain ownership of the Yomitan Airfield with more than 150 "former landowners" (J: *kyū jinushi* 旧地主)[17] and concerned people (Shimabukuro 2010). With the participation of "former landowners" from other *aza*, a lengthy battle over Yomitan Airfield land ownership began.

Phase One—The Question of Ownership

"The Yomitan Airfield is not state land. Per Article 15 of the National Mobilization Act, the airfield should be returned to landowners. Its usage can be discussed later" (Shimabukuro 2010, 6). The four Zakimi men, who submitted the written report, made this clear statement based on their three-year long voluntary research. Their report included a description of the traditional land tenure system in Okinawa, the agricultural situation in Yomitan, and the National Mobilization Act, which had drastically changed the political situation of Okinawa/ns.

The construction of Yomitan Airfield for the Japanese Imperial Army began in 1943 as an operation to protect Japan from its enemies (Shimabukuro 2010). Upon conducting a

[17] The Yomitan villagers who claimed landownership were called "former landowners" because the Yomitan Airfield was listed as state land. After Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration, the Japanese state maintained their ownership of the airfield and provided use rights to the area for the US forces.

preliminary survey for the airfield construction in Yomitan, Lieutenant Colonel Jin Naomichi made a verbal promise to landowners that the land would be returned in the future when the Japanese Army no longer required the airfield (Shimabukuro 2010). Because of their urgent need for the land, the Japanese Imperial Army decided on the tactic of land seizure and offered compensation for cultivated products and house evictions. The compensation and eviction fees were paid through the purchase of government bonds instead of cash payments (Shimabukuro 2010). Unfortunately for villagers, in the confusion of wartime, such forms of money turned out to be worthless. The postwar government has never bought back these bonds, leaving the villagers without any compensation to this day (Shimabukuro 2010).

The Zakimi people stated, "It was not too much to say that there was compulsory relocation" (Shimabukuro 2010, 11). Under the pressure of the wartime regime and the National Mobilization Act, airfield construction was executed without providing an option for landowners to reject it. No matter how Zakimi landowners recalled or regretted the past, then-Japanese citizens had been forced to follow the national policy. People who resisted were treated as unpatriotic and suffered sanctions (Shimabukuro 2010; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). Many citizens believed cooperation with the military was the duty of Japanese Imperial subjects (Shimabukuro 2010). It was also common for villagers to offer their land and donate the eviction fee to the state (Shimabukuro 2010). Meanwhile, there were also landowners who had no choice but to give up their land. For example, Tōyama Seitoku, testified that his land was condemned for the airfield while he was absent on Tinian Island (Shimabukuro 2010, 187).[18] In the end, prewar Japanese Imperialism created a situation allowing approximately 256.1 hectares of Yomitan property to be occupied and used by the military free of cost.[19] The Airfield was constructed on the private property of more than 600 different landowners (Shimabukuro 2010).

The main goal of the Zakimi men was to regain ownership of the land back from the state, as provided for under Japanese law (Shimabukuro 2010). The first step for the landowners'

[18] Indigenous landowner Tōyama Seitoku was fifty-eight years old when he wrote his testimony in 1977. He claimed that he emigrated to Tinian in 1938 and returned to Okinawa in August 1946 (Shimabukuro 2010, 187).

[19] The land area the Japanese Army used does not necessarily coincide precisely with the Yomitan Airfield the US military used (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2005, 7).

coalition, therefore, was to testify to the Indigenous presence of "former landowners," the chaotic process of land seizure, and the need for war reparations. Meanwhile, villagers requested that the state clarify how Yomitan Airfield had become state property. The response by the National Property Division was unsatisfactory to the villagers. While the state claimed that there were land sales contracts, under war conditions, there were no records found of either purchase or rental agreements with Indigenous landowners (Yomitan Hikōjō Yōchi Shuken Kaifuku Jinushikai 1980).

In response, Indigenous landowners' counteractions and resistance took various forms and emphasized their ancestral relationship to the land. They soon started gathering testimony documenting the absence of land sales contracts. They also created a detailed map of the area based on aerial photographs and their memories of the prewar communities (Yomitan Hikōjō Yōchi Shuken Kaifuku Jinushikai 1980). It is worth noting that Indigenous landowners added in their request statement, "For farmers, the land is the source of life. It is the place to converse with ancestors' spirits, and it is the spirits of ancestors themselves" (Shimabukuro 2010, 6). Thus, not only did these previous landowners claim the economic importance of the land for farmers, but they also stressed their cultural and spiritual attachment to the land. They believed that their elders or youths would repeatedly raise the airfield issue before the government could succeed in whitewashing history (Shimabukuro 2010).

The core of the problem was that the Yomitan Airfield was managed by the state as a state property without fact checking of its title. Under the postwar constitution, the state had merely claimed the Yomitan Airfield and offered it to the US Army. Without material proof of the title, communication between the Indigenous landowners and the state reached a deadlock (Yomitan-son 1983).

Phase Two—Claiming "Collective" Land Ownership

In 1979, the situation slowly changed to a path to reconciliation. After repeated Diet proceedings over land ownership, the Okinawa Development Agency, which was established to promote infrastructure after Okinawa's reversion to Japan, suggested employing the Act on Special Measures concerning Promotion and Development of Okinawa of 1971 (Yomitan-son 1983). With an effort to negotiate a solution in a step-by-step manner, the state suggested Yomitan Village begin planning for the effective use of the state land (Yomitan-son 1983). With local government planning, the state intended to grant the airfield to Yomitan Village eventually.

While the dispute over the land ownership between the state and Indigenous landowners was not settled, Yomitan Village invested financially in developing the Yomitan Airfield Conversion Plan, involving a series of consultations and discussions with the committee members including assemblymen, village officials, scholars, former landowners, tacit farmers, senior groups, women's groups, local economic organizations, and *aza* Community Board leaders (Yomitan-son 1983). While the consultation gave priority to the will of former landowners, planning as a village, with expected land restoration as a village property underpinned the villagers' goals of collective land ownership.

This phase of making "Indigenous" space with government planning shifted questions of land claims among Yomitan villagers. In order to stop the military use of the airfield as soon as possible and make the space available for villagers, the government plan was deemed a reasonable and accountable countermeasure for the village. Thus, Yomitan Village served as an intermediary and developed the Conversion Plan reflecting the intention of "Indigenous" landowners. While previously only *kyū-jinushi* 旧地主 (J: former landowners) were claiming the land, now the local government entity, which represents all taxpayers of the village including former landowners, landless villagers and newcomer Japanese residents, is a claimant. The Conversion Plan brought the local concerned parties to an agreement to reallocate 30 percent of the Airfield for public use and 70 percent for *kyū-jinushi* (Yomitan-son 1983). The plan for the 30 percent included the construction of public facilities such as a village hall, an athletic field, and a public school in the middle of the Airfield.

In contrast to the steady progress in local government planning, however, the process of land restoration from the US military was proceeding at a slow pace. According to an official at the National Property Division, who was unwilling to go forward with Yomitan's Conversion Plan, then-Mayor Yamauchi Tokushin specifically pledged to make space for Yomitan villagers by adding a plausible *feng shui* theory of "Indigenous" land use (Yamauchi 2014; see fig. 14). Yamauchi explained how *feng shui* of the land would assure the importance of having public space in the middle of Yomitan Airfield although he later wrote in his autobiography that he was uncertain about the *feng shui* of the place when he spoke to the state officials (Yamauchi 2014, 95). Later, Yamauchi sent village officials to a *feng shui* specialist in Korea and confirmed that the prewar Indigenous community was located and oriented well according to the principle of

feng shui (Yamauchi 2014). Fortunately, Yamauchi's *feng shui* theory worked to provide a reason for the village to build public facilities in the middle of the military airfield.

On June 29, 1995, the Japan-US Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO) agreed on joint use of the Yomitan Airfield by the Yomitan Village (Yamauchi 2014).[20] In this way, making "Indigenous space" on the military land was successful. The construction of the Village Office at the center of the Airfield was completed, and the villagers celebrated its inauguration as an "edifice of self-governance, decentralization, participation, democracy, and peace" (Yamauchi 2014, 111). Although the permission provided only for "interim use," the repossession and use of the Airfield by the village opened new space for the community. Through self-organization and the reconfiguration of space, the village successfully refuted the military use of Indigenous space and regenerated the landscape as a democratic hub for deliberating alternative futures. It is not known how convincing Yamauchi's theorization of the landscape's *feng shui* was for the state officials. However, for the villagers, creating a community space with a land-based vision on the militarized area was a redefining moment. It marked the reclaiming of colonized space by Indigenous hands, minds, and spirits and the beginning of exercising autonomy over the space where public meetings could be hosted, and cultural events could be held. It was meaningful for villagers that local governance could be exercised on the land that everyone worked together to regain through protests and planning.

In December 1996, SACO approved the final report that promised the total return of the entire Airfield by 2000 (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son n.d.). Although the return proceeded behind schedule, the ownership of the Airfield was transferred from the state to the Village through the land-space exchange. Yomitan sold a smaller piece of village property occupied by the US military for the exchange of 222.8 hectares of state property, known as the Yomitan Airfield (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son n.d.). Yamauchi (2014, 74) reflects on this land restoration process:

[20] The installation of Japanese facilities on the military land was possible based on the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement Article II 4 (a). The Agreement sets forth: "When facilities and areas are temporarily not being used by the United States armed forces, the Government of Japan may make, or permit Japanese nationals to make, interim use of such facilities and areas provided that it is agreed between the two Governments through the Joint Committee that such use would not be harmful to the purposes for which the facilities and areas are normally used by the United States armed force" (MOFA 1960).

> The power of the US military and the state is big. When the weak stand against the strong, we cannot resist by force. That is why we thought carefully and rendered "artful ways." Meanwhile, we continued asking for "compassion" from the US military and police officers. Even if they had a duty to stop our protests, I believed there was something that connected us as human beings.

Interestingly, Yamauchi often shares the story of when he met a US Army Garrison representative in Yomitan to request the land return to the Yomitan people. Yamauchi (2011) well remembers that the representative replied to Yamauchi saying that he was a Native American descendant and understood his feeling about the land struggle. This meeting with a Native American military commander seems to have made a strong impression on Yamauchi, causing him to realize the complexity within US militarism and to reflect on Indigenous commonalities masked by colonialism.

While standing firmly for Indigenous land repossession and the self-governance of Yomitan, Yamauchi was aware of one rural municipality's weakness to counteract the state and the US military. So, invoking a tactic of strategic essentialism, he orchestrated a range of cultural and ethical diplomacy and passionately encouraging the villagers to restore Indigenous cultural practices and traditions while aiming to renew the sense of pride among Yomitan people. Yamauchi set up spaces and places to produce Indigenous textiles and pottery. His actions to promote these Indigenous products added recognition and value to them. He also unprecedentedly laid out the Village's Master Plan in the local language (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 1989; Yamauchi 2014). Yamauchi (2014, 132) noted, "Language is a precious cultural heritage of each place. I think the language used to convey the future of Yomitan, which aims to become a self-sustainable community, should be our language." While physically remaking "Indigenous" space through land restoration and development for Yomitan, Yamauchi's cultural promotion expanded the peoples' sense of belonging and the scales of Indigenous identification to fit in a post-reversion political structure. Moreover, sketching out Yomitan's landscape and the government plan in the local language, which was once strictly banned by the state, showed the connection between places and Indigenous knowledge and opened possibilities of Indigenous resurgence that are grounded in and convey their worldviews and value systems.

Phase Three—Squatting on Indigenous Land

After the debate over the return of the Yomitan Airfield was settled, the last challenge for Yomitan was the preparation to have *de facto* control of the space and implement government

planning. The Conversion Plan allocated seventy percent of the land for agricultural development with the basic consideration to eventually restore the titles to the former landowners. Yomitan Village made an agreement with the state on the land grant and exchange of the Yomitan Airfield with a small "useless" parcel of village property, contemporaneously occupied by the military. Mayor Ishimine Denjitsu explained,

> When the land ownership issue was still left unsolved, the US military squatted for twenty-three years. The Japanese law did not apply to us [in Okinawa]. Many people, here and there, filed legal actions in restitution of land ownership but they lost. To put it simply, [we lost] at judicial means. Neither the former landowners nor the state could provide valid evidence because of the war. So, the village took a way to reconcile with the state rather than fighting in court … We know the airfield used to be our land. We gave a hundred steps back to bring reconciliation. We then agreed with land grant and exchange with a village property … We decided to make it agricultural land first. To put another way, a state land is for all Japan. Anyone can buy it. If it is commercial use land, we would have to invite bids. However, if it is agricultural land, there is a state policy to use the land for agricultural production of Yomitan, for the people of Yomitan.

Through the government planning, Yomitan chose to designate much of the area for agricultural development that allowed the Village to carry out land improvement and readjustments projects. However, the land titles are not transferred to "former landowners" yet. Instead, Yomitan suggested former landowners organize and use the agricultural land collectively. This was done by Indigenous landowners working together in joint venture of financing agricultural corporations, with the village allocating re-organized land space to these corporations. Since five *aza* had resided on the area covered by the Yomitan Airfield, previous landowners formed five corporations according to the Indigenous community organization. (The specific functions and actual conditions of corporations and agricultural development are discussed in Chapter 5.)

When Yomitan Village started working on land use planning, tacit farming came to be recognized as an issue. While practices of tacit farming stem largely from the historical and structural relationships of native Okinawans, the state, and the US military (more on this in Chapter 4), the land grant from the state to the village resulted in thrusting responsibility for this issue onto the village. The tacit farming issue has created internal concerns and conflicts about memberships and attributions of who is included and excluded as users of agricultural land. The

following unpacks the issue of tacit farming and land use in the Yomitan Airfield, and I will discuss stories of contemporary tacit farmers in Chapter 4.

Tacit farming is a practice by Okinawans to plow the land and grow food in places occupied and controlled by the US military. This practice has been observed for a long time since the end of the Battle of Okinawa, in 1945 (Arasaki 1995; Taira 2009). As the US military repeatedly seized and released Indigenous land after the battle, much of the land they occupied was located in the central part of Okinawa Island, where many people had lived and farmed (Arasaki 1995; Taira 2009).

In March 1946, the US Military Government addressed farmland redistribution to each village in Okinawa (Taira 2009; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). According to the Report of the Military Government, even seven months after civilian resettlement was allowed, "125,000 Okinawans remain[ed] displaced from their native places" (which included 13,000 from Yomitan) (Taira 2009; US Naval Military Government Ryukyu Islands 1946). For some Okinawan villagers, liberation from DP camps did not mean resettlement on their homeland. Rather, it was another displacement. While living space decreased due to the military land seizure, the Okinawan population's need for residential land increased rapidly because of the return of evacuated people (Taira 2009; US Naval Military Government Ryukyu Islands 1946).

The land redistribution order allowed villages the authority to allocate the land to residents regardless of land ownership, while aiming to establish food sufficiency in Okinawa (Taira 2009; Tochiren Sanjū-shūnen Kinen Henshū Iinkai 1989). For people who could prove their previous ownership, the land was re-allocated to them (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969; Tochiren Sanjū-shūnen Kinen Henshū Iinkai 1989). However, the landless were also allowed to farm there and the former landowners were not allowed to refuse them from using the land or charge a fee (Taira 2009, 189). Those who had been dispossessed of their property and had returned from wartime evacuation could ask others to share the land or use the "open" military land for free (Taira 2009; Tochiren Sanjū-shūnen Kinen Henshū Iinkai 1989). In this way, tacit farming began on military land. Furthermore, the Military Government Direction No. 2 Article 4 on *Limits of Construction and Cultivation* issued in 1950 delegated authority to commanders of regional bases in the island to tolerate farming of their base lands with the condition that farmers would not claim any rights (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015, 335). Accordingly, for the Yomitan Airfield, the Military Government issued the permit to Yomitan Village as meeting

full compliance with conditions by the US and waiving any rights. Along with the USCAR Ordinance No. 20 on *Acquisition of Leasehold Interest*, a permit for farming and collecting firewood issued on August 25, 1961, had been used for legal justification of tacit farming (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015; Yomitan Hikōjō Jinushi Shuken Kaifuku Jinushikai 2000).

Practices of tacit farming continued even after Okinawa's reversion to the Japanese administration. Although the USCAR orders and permits had expired with the transfer of administrative authority, this farming practice persisted as long as the military occupied the land (with or without barbed-wire fences) and was tolerated. Within the military-administered space, neither the village, *aza* communities, nor tacit farmers had any authority or way to claim their rights. Thus, when the control of Yomitan Airfield was handed over from the US military to the state, tacit farming in the Airfield continued to be tolerated in the shadow of the state power. In the open airfield without a fence, tacit farming sites expanded (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015). Farm equipment storage units, farm work huts, and goat sheds were built illegally and dotted the field. Practitioners of tacit farming in the Yomitan Airfield were not limited to previous landowners or villagers (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015). While most of them, including Indigenous landowners, had cultivated the land before the reversion, some farmers, who commuted from another town, had paid for and acquired the "right to farm" from Indigenous landowners (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015).

The agreement Yomitan Village acquired from the state and the US Army for "interim use" of the airfield required the village to take responsibility for dealing with land issues. Although tacit farming is a condition that the intertwined power of settler colonialism and militarization created on Indigenous land and living space, the state and the military both quickly delegated their responsibility. It was when the Conversion Plan was finalized that the local government planning on agricultural development caused fissures between the Indigenous landowners and tacit farmers. As the land return proceeded according to the government scheme, tenant tacit farmers were excluded from membership in the landowners' agricultural corporation as beneficiaries of the Village's farmland (Kumihara 2004). While the tacit farmers who are also Indigenous landowners, agreed to stop tacit farming practices and considered sharing the plots re-allocated for the five agricultural corporations, some of the landless tacit farmers refused to leave the land, which led to lawsuits against the village (Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai

2015). Regardless of their usufructs, high productivity of crops, and economic contribution through agricultural production, landless tacit farmers could neither chose to become members of corporations nor be compensated for evacuation (Kumihara 2004). The land ownership by the Village overrode the "right to farm" of tacit farmers. If tenants did not agree to stop tacit farming or settle with the village, they would be judged as an "illegal occupation" of the Yomitan Airfield (Kumihara 2004; Yasuda Keizō Kaisōroku Henshū Iinkai 2015). The post reversion legal system of land ownership and entitlement resulted in disadvantaging landless tacit farmers. Although the Village eventually reached a settlement with the landless tacit farmers, the Village failed to recognize not only the production capacity of these farmers but also their long contribution to keeping the land cultivable for future use (Kumihara 2004).

Conclusion

The repossession of Yomitan Airfield shows when, how, and to what extent "Indigeneity" matters in the contemporary land politics of Okinawa. While being "Indigenous" has functioned as a mobilizing tool to restore control over one's living space from undesirable occupation and authority, being "Indigenous" has also required recognizing "new coalitions and scales of identification" (Clifford 2007, 204). The interactive indigenous place-making process expanded and fostered people's sense of belonging in broader spatial and cultural scales.

An "Indigenous" space in Yomitan envisioned by the Phoenix has emerged through a discourse of landownership in the villagers' relations to multiple subjectivities. Indigeneity is constructed relative not only to the state and the foreign military, but it is also assembled on top of the complex relationship between the Indigenous landowners and the landless. In a process of dealing with the modern law-governed nation-state, local understanding of "Indigenous" space has gradually shifted from cultural- and genealogical-based sense of belonging and peoplehood matrices to the rights-based membership, entitlement, and management of a community. A rhetoric of governing memberships, rights, authorities, responsibilities, and contributions became relevant for the people in Yomitan to re-conceptualize Indigeneity using a contemporary legal framework of land management. Then the discourse of Indigeneity emerged from peoples' effort to secure "Indigenous" living space in a modern political structure and became a voice for Okinawan self-determination.

This chapter has demonstrated that, rather than just engaging in state-centered and rights-centered discourses, Okinawans have invented and carried out a range of everyday actions and

reconceptions of land that are key to Indigenous space making for themselves. Historical practices of community governance and land use suggest Okinawan Indigeneity be reconfigured with people, land, belonging, and power. As Hathaway (2010, 322) argues Indigeneity is "a process of continuing emergence," and we can see here that various conceptualizations of Indigeneity are deeply enmeshed and submerged in rural Okinawan land struggles. Behind the scene of successful Okinawan resistance to the US military occupation and making "Indigenous space" meant that conceptions of space, power and belonging competed throughout the land restoration process. While these entangled knots and conceptual dominance of the land with ownership, entitlement, and membership have pushed some actors to the margins, alternative imaginings of "Indigenous" space anchor peoples' attachment to the land and play an important role in shaping a new political identity and sense of belonging for Indigenous Okinawans.

CHAPTER 3

Storying the Landscape in *Shimakutuba*

After a long interview session with Higa Haruka as we drove around Yomitan, we stopped at a farmer's market, Yunta Ichiba. Haruka parked her car, opened the car trunk and called to me in a mischievous tone. When I approached her, she took out a big chunk of iron wrapped in a blanket from the car trunk. It was an unexploded munition, seemingly a US-made five-inch shell. Haruka handed it to me and said, "Can you imagine if this was thrown into your house? Boom!" I felt like the bombshell in my hands tripled in weight. It was too heavy to hold by myself. Not only the iron chunk itself but the conversation I had with her earlier in the car weighed heavily on my shoulders and my heart. Haruka told me that she got the shell from an acquaintance. She did not know if it would be lawful for an ordinary citizen like her to own it, but she told me she might want to use it in her play.

Higa Haruka is an unpretentious woman in her mid-thirties who grew up in the neighboring town of Yomitan. While she works at a museum, she is also a scriptwriter and leader of her theatrical troupe, "Higa-za." Currently consisting of seven or eight members in their twenties and thirties, Higa-za performs creative plays, which include elements of traditional Okinawan folk plays using *shimakutuba,*[21] the Indigenous languages of Okinawa. Haruka's ideas for writing, acting, and directing the plays develop from her reactions to interesting phenomena in everyday life in Okinawa. Some plays are based on stories she has heard from elders. Others are from events she and her friends experienced as they grew up.

In Okinawa, like many other Indigenous communities, the language shift from the native tongue to Japanese was a catalyst for significant social change and different understandings of personal and collective identity. It is not uncommon for younger Okinawans, who were born

[21] In this dissertation, I use *shimakutuba* to refer to the Indigenous languages of the Ryukyu Archipelago. There are various ways to indicate Indigenous languages. For example, *Uchinaaguchi* is commonly used to refer the language of Okinawa. Lately, the term *shimakutuba* is also used in the prefectural government-led language revitalization initiatives and they mean it to include language diversity within Okinawa Prefecture such as *Myaaku-futsu* and *Yeema-muni*. The term "*shima guchi*" is also used by native speakers, and the term literally translates to "community mouth." Romanization of *shimakutuba* follows the transcription standards of Mitsugu Sakihara's *Okinawa-English Wordbook* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

after 1972, to be unfamiliar with and incapable of using the native languages of their grandparents (Okinawa-ken Bunka Kankō Supōtsu-bu Bunka Shinkō-ka 2014). Haruka was nineteen years old when she became interested in *shimakutuba*. Her first experience of reading *shimakutuba* books in public, mainly in front of an elderly audience, provided a spark for her to learn more about *shimakutuba*. Since then, she has learned various *shimakutuba*, including the mixed use of *shimakutuba* and Japanese practiced among youth, performed by them in her plays, and used by her in everyday conversations.

This chapter focuses attention on native Okinawan efforts to use Indigenous languages in social dialogue and the role of Indigenous historiography as a way to deeply and holistically understand the reality and accounts of the community. Examining Indigenous language-related activities, I demonstrate how *shimakutuba* activities in the everyday life of Okinawans add a layer to the Indigenous landscape and lay the groundwork for what Mishuana Goeman (2013, 4) calls "spatial decolonization." Through her research on Indigenous women's narratives in literary writings, Goeman (2013) challenges the colonial geographies and histories. Instead, she describes narratives and maps that reflect the complex intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality on native spaces. (Re)mapping is a form of "spatial justice" that endorses Indigenous understandings of social, cultural, and political space and underpins all efforts towards remembering native connections to the land and imagining alternative relationships of native peoples and communities (Goeman 2013). While colonial geographies tend to "fix" the land and create powerful political authority and mechanisms to erase Indigenous connection to the land, Goeman (2008, 25) asserts that "[l]and in this moment is living and layered memory."

In Indigenous Okinawa, spatial decolonization is practiced with community engagement in native ethnography and active use of Okinawan languages and expressions. Two examples of everyday practices by Ryūkyū-ko wo Kiroku Suru Kai 琉球弧を記録する会 (J: The Ryukyu Archipelago Documentation Group; hereafter Ryūkyū-ko) and Higa-za 比嘉座 show how their efforts lay the groundwork for potential unbounded decolonial futures. I argue that native ethnography and the use of *shimakutuba* are not only restatements of Indigenous identity but also reconceptualizations of Indigenous space and bodies in layered memories and storied landscapes.

First, native ethnography and *shimakutuba* are foundational for spatial decolonization as they demonstrate the connection of languages to specific places, and yet, *shimakutuba* also

embraces the diversity and fluidity of narratives. *Kutuba* or narrative changes as *shima* (O: community, belonging) changes. Recognizing the variety of Okinawan languages is a constant reminder to us to acknowledge the various perspectives on events and phenomena in Okinawa. I explain this diversity with an example of works by Ryūkyū-ko. Second, *shimakutuba* help to unveil the layered stories of place. For the native people, the land is not just a geographical locale. It is an accumulation of Indigenous knowledge, experience, and interactions. It is "living and layered memory" of the people (Goeman 2008, 25). I examine the layered memory through conversations with Haruka. Third, the richness of *shimakutuba* shows the capability to imagine our decolonized futures. Re-articulating the Indigenous space in *shimakutuba* encourages Okinawans of younger generations, who grew up in the militarized landscape, to connect with their ancestral memories and to freely imagine alternative landscapes.

In the previous chapter, I examined the role and power of *aza* communities in perpetuating Indigenous relationship to the land. In this chapter, I explore and analyze how language revitalization works to affect this land-centered and yet epistemological approach to resurgence. Although the link is often unrecognized, revitalization of Indigenous language is crucial and embedded in the course of Indigenous resurgence. Together with farming practices described in later chapters of this dissertation, *shimakutuba* practices intertwined with a sense of belonging and community enhance further possibilities for overcoming settler-military space making and reviving Indigenous landscape.

The Loss of the Landscape and the Loss of *Shimakutuba*

A famous Okinawan poet who lived in Tokyo in the early twentieth century, Yamanokuchi Baku (1975, 2000), expressed his wistful sense of loss and confusion when he returned to Okinawa after the war.

Shima no tsuchi wo funda totanni *ganjuuyi to aisatsu shita tokoro* *Hai okagesamade genkidesu toka itte*	The moment I set foot on the island soil[22] and greeted them *Ganjuy*?[23] Very well, thank you

[22] Translated by Rie Takagi. In *Southern Exposure: Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa*, edited by Michael Molasky and Steve Rabson (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).
[23] O: How are you? Translated by Rie Takagi. In *Southern Exposure* (Molasky and Rabson 2000).

shima no hitowa nihongo de kitanoda	the island people replied in Japanese
Kyōshū wa isasaka tomadoi shite shimatte	My nostalgia at a bit of a loss I muttered
Uchinaaguchi madin muru *ikusani sattaru basui to iuto* *shima no hitowa kushō shitano daga* *Okinawago wa jōzu desune to kitanoda*	*Uchināguchi madin muru* *Ikusani sattaru basui*[24] to which the island people feigned a smile but remarked how well I spoke the Okinawan language

This poem titled "*Tama wo abita shima* 弾を浴びた島 (J: Shell-shocked Island)" was written to describe how war destroyed not only the landscape but also the languages of Okinawa. This short but powerful poem reminds us of the impact of war and violence on peoples' cultural continuance and psyches. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1994, 9) described this impact as a "cultural bomb," which has powerfully governed a domain of thinking processes, demolished a major mediating tool of human interaction, and held colonized people in "spiritual subjugation."

While the war killed and dispersed native speakers of *shimakutuba*, the loss of Indigenous languages in Okinawa began much earlier, starting long before 1945 with the incorporation of Okinawa into the modern Japanese nation-state and "successful" implementation of the national language ideology and policies. Linguist Patrick Heinrich (2012) demonstrates how language ideologies envision and act in constructing social imaginaries, national culture, and identity. In Japan, where Standard Japanese is viewed as "an emblem of national unity, modernity and progress" (Heinrich 2012, 131), the use of Ryukyuan languages is considered "backward."

Referring to Ngũgĩ's work, Ishihara Masahide (2010) argues that Okinawa in the time of the language shift experienced a "colonization of the mind." Ideologies and policies, such as the Dialect Regulation Ordinance (J: *hōgen torishimari rei* 方言取締令) and the Movement for the Enforcement of Standard Language (J: *hyōjungo reikō undō* 標準語励行運動) in the early 1900s as well as banning local dialects with *hōgen fuda,*[25] reinforced the colonial effects of

[24] O: Was even your dialect destroyed by the war?

[25] *Hōgen fuda* 方言札 is a punishment system used in school to discourage the use of pupils' Native languages. A student, who speaks his or her *shimakutuba*, is made to wear *hōgen fuda* (J:

Okinawans' self-denial in their minds (Heinrich 2012; Ishihara 2010). While Okinawans originally worked to be recognized as "Japanese nationals" through language acquisition, they more recently strive for the revival of endangered Ryukyuan languages to affirm their being and to gain confidence as "Okinawan" (Ishihara 2010). The recent prefectural government-led language revitalization initiatives such as the establishment of "*Shimakutuba* Day" on September 18, have promoted re-affirmation of the importance of *shimakutuba* among the general public and opened up space for Okinawans to reuse gradually their native languages and self-determine their relationships to traditional culture (Okinawa-ken Bunka Kankō Supōtsu-bu Bunka Shinkō-ka 2014). Ishihara (2010), therefore, calls the language revitalization movement Okinawans' efforts to "decolonize the mind."

In this chapter I expand Ishihara's argument by showing grassroots language revitalization activism in the context of a long journey for decolonization of Okinawan minds, bodies, and land. The activities I examine in this chapter are not necessarily associated with political campaigns, nor do they look like overt political actions for "decolonization," nor are they directly supported by government-led language revitalization projects. However, that does not mean that everyday language practices and performances in Okinawa are apolitical. The significance of language for Indigenous peoples is to exercise autonomy and access traditional cultural practices (Hinton and Hale 2001). I argue that a set of efforts and practices Okinawans engage in the everyday use of *shimakutuba* is a form of Indigenous resurgence and "intellectual engagement" to reinterpret Indigenous ontology and recreate hope for future understanding of the world we live in (Silva 2017). Noenoe K. Silva (2017, 2) argues, "resurgence is our creation of a world in which we speak, write, and compose in our native language; take care of our ʻāina (land) and waters; reinvoke and appreciate our native deities; and live (at least mentally) free from the destructive settler colonialism in which we now find ourselves." I, too, find endless potential and power in native languages we have nurtured in Okinawa. As an essential element of Indigenous ontology, native languages support, sustain, and make our ancestors' knowledge flourish. Our approach to *shimakutuba* is a legacy of the past as well as a mindful investment toward decolonial futures.

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a dialect card) around his/her neck and this publicly shames him/her until another student speaks inappropriately and is assigned the card.

Wartime Narrated in *Shimakutuba*: The Diversity of Life Narratives

Since the 1980s, Okinawan writers have actively conducted and compiled ethnographies throughout the islands (Nakamura 2002). These ethno-historiographical books compiled and published by villagers are called *aza-shi*, and include a broad range of topics: community history, geology, topography, place names, folk culture, migration, war experiences, and so on. While there are similar attempts in other municipalities of Japan, *aza-shi* is unique to Okinawan communities and involves planning, collecting information, editing, and publishing (Nakamura 2002). An important aspect of *aza-shi* is that it is initiated and created by community members in contemplation of their individual experiences in the history of the community (Nakamura 2002). Nakamura Seiji (2002) explains that this kind of compilation work is a way for a community to take responsibility for residents of the past, present, and future. Although both are compilation texts of history, *aza-shi* 字誌 (J: community ethno-history) is different from *son-shi* 村史 (J: municipal village history). While the latter is written from the government's perspective to record events in the past, *aza-shi* is an assemblage of community dynamism focusing on the subjectivity of ordinary residents. In Okinawa, more than 400 *aza-shi* have been published in total (Nakamura 2002, 77).

In Yomitan, sixteen out of twenty-three *aza*, which trace their roots to before WWII, have published *aza-shi*. The *aza-shi* from the Sobe community is considered to be the great regional masterpiece, and people who took key roles in it were the photographer Higa Toyomitsu and the oral historian Murayama Tomoe. Toyomitsu and Tomoe, both in their sixties and from Yomitan, have devoted their lives to documenting the life stories and narratives of the native people in the Ryukyu Islands. Since 1987, with other editorial committee members from the Sobe community, Tomoe and Toyomitsu interviewed community residents, especially elders in *shimakutuba*, and compiled an ethno-history of Sobe. In 1999, more than ten years of their field research resulted in a two-volume masterpiece.

Murayama Tomoe (1999) recalls how she was overwhelmed by the process of compiling *Sobe-shi* as many informants had shared very graphic descriptions and shocking memories of war experiences. While generally *aza-shi* cover a wide range of themes, all of them include descriptions of war experiences that are surely unique to the Indigenous historiographies of Okinawa. While the Battle of Okinawa usually takes up a small portion of Japanese national history, the Okinawa history books including *aza-shi* never omit descriptions of the battle. For

Okinawans, the experiences of being embroiled in the war are the collective memory that people most strongly feel needs to be shared and recorded. Due to the vast number of thick descriptions of war experiences, the *Sobe-shi* project ended up publishing a large two-volume work—one volume on the war, and the other on folk culture. Although many survivors had not necessarily shared stories of their war experience with their family members, this cultural project of Indigenous historiography broke the wall of silence among survivors. Murayama (1999) wrote, "The books might have lacked technical factors due to my unfamiliarity with the compilation of history books. However, that space, in which a speaker and a listener face each other and fully engage, is the work only the same *shimanchu*[26] could create. And the books are the outcome." Building upon intensive fieldwork and careful editing by the people from the community, *Sobe-shi* represents a unique "flavor" of *shima* (O: community, belonging) absorbing the wisdom and power of the community (Murayama, 2002, 86).

These grassroots efforts are highly recognized and different from government-led and standardized editions of history books. Despite the disadvantageous conditions of postwar Sobe that dispossessed people of their access to the homeland, very diligent and careful fieldwork by the community in their *shimakutuba* enabled them to describe their stories vividly. With official records for historical background, *Sobe-shi* reflects the faces and voices of the community and lays the groundwork for the Indigenous historiography of Yomitan.

As the *Sobe-shi* project approached its completion, Tomoe and Toyomitsu turned over the project to form a group called "Ryūkyū-ko wo Kiroku Suru Kai 琉球弧を記録する会" (hereafter Ryūkyū-ko) in 1996. The group primarily intends to document the endangered languages of *shimakutuba* and the folk culture of the Ryukyu Islands through the narratives of war survivors, life stories, and folklore of the Ryukyu Archipelago (Ryūkyū-ko wo Kiroku Suru Kai 2003). Ryūkyū-ko has collected stories of over a thousand war survivors in the Ryukyu Archipelago in their respective native tongues and documented them in a film project called "*Shimakutuba de kataru ikusa-yu* 島クトゥバで語る戦世 (O/J: Wartime Narrated in *Shimakutuba*; hereafter Ikusa-yu)." Unlike the prominent narrations of war experiences in Okinawa such as one told by former Himeyuri Student Corps members in peace museums and used for peace education, this war narration in *shimakutuba* tells individual stories in their native

[26] *Shimanchu* means the people of the community.

tongues. Retelling Okinawan war experiences in this multifaceted and multisited way enables re-mapping the movements and settlements of Indigenous communities during and after the war. Documentation of *shimakutuba* narrations highlights the real survival stories of native Okinawans while it affirms and acknowledges the suffering and lessons from the past. All *shimakutuba* are different from each other, and there are many ways to interpret and express Okinawan experiences of war and militarization of *shima* (O: community).

In the summer of 2014, I went to a screening of the film at the Okinawa Prefectural Museum in Naha. The very first story was by a man from Yomitan who served in the Japanese Imperial Army.

> It was midnight on May 27th, on our way to escape from Shuri, one soldier from our troop shot himself in the throat trying to commit suicide, but he failed. He broke his jaw instead, and he could not speak. He was suffering from pain and said, "Kill me!" The enemy was approaching us. We would be killed if we make any noise. He was in pain. He was suffering because he had failed to kill himself. We could not stand watching him. I had a Japanese sword. So, I asked him, "Are you in pain?" "I am," he said. "Do you want me to kill you?" I asked. And he gestured to cut [his throat] (Ryūkyū-ko wo Kiroku Suru Kai 1997, 17-18).[27]

This man's narration was very vivid and lively in his *shimakutuba*. In the film, the interviewer asked, "*Chitchan*? (O: Did you cut him?)" "*Chiri raran, jooi!* (O: I could not. Never!)," the man replied. I felt very relieved and closely observed his tone, his facial expression, and reactions. It was my first time listening to a war story told by an Okinawan man who had served in the Japanese Army (although I had read stories before).

Several more stories by war survivors from all over the Ryukyu Islands followed in the film. After the screening, during a Q and A session, a woman in the audience in a traditional Ryukyuan *kimono* with the traditionally knotted hairstyle angrily asked Toyomitsu and an event organizer why they showed this man's story at the very beginning. She said that the man seemed to flaunt his masculine and militaristic violence. Certainly, it seemed to me that the man in the film was talking animatedly with some humor, although it was also a violent account. Toyomitsu answered that he just intended to show all of the individual stories without deliberately editing or

[27] The original interview transcript and the Japanese translation are in *Shimakutuba de kataru ikusa-yu* (1999). The narration is paraphrased and translated into English by the author.

selecting any of them. A young man from the audience raised his hand up and said that laughing could be a symptom of PTSD.

Because of the tremendous sacrifices that Okinawans made in the battle and the strong desire to construct peace out of the oppressive memory, the history of the Battle of Okinawa has been predominantly constructed around a victimhood narrative that emphasizes how horrible the war was for Okinawans. Yet, such victimhood narratives may become double-edged. As Okinawan women speak against the masculine war violence, Okinawan male voices have gradually been undermined and muted in the history. Toyomitsu commented in his film project,

> I mean … *Ojii* (O: grandpa) are the ones who killed people during the war. On the other hand, *Obaa* (O: grandma) are the ones who were killed. Even in the same family, it happened. Those who killed and those who were being killed. *Ojii* went to China and killed people. They say they did it because it was the military order. It was their imperial education. *Obaa* evacuated to the caves. But it was so horrible because some were killed in caves by Japanese soldiers. Even so, they say it was because it was war. In the same place, both happened ... the two extremes. That was the war (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai 2005).

For Toyomitsu, capturing Okinawan men's stories in their *shimakutuba* was not to display their masculinity, rather, it was part of showing all the life stories, including how these men have made sense of their involvement as subjects of the Japanese Emperor, who was an oppressor in Japan's colonies. In the film, there are no accusations, no glossing over of events and actions, or victimization. The diversity and dynamics of the historical narratives are reflected in the vibrant and heterogeneous state of being of *shimakutuba*. Thus, the language becomes a true witness of many interwoven lives, and people's brush with death.

Many survivors say, "Only those who were there can understand." War stories told in *shimakutuba* capture multiple locales and perspectives of history that enable us to interpret the diverse Indigenous identities, memories, and knowledge of our ancestors. They challenge authentication, victimization, totalizing, and probably the glorification of "peaceful" Okinawa. Although it must have been difficult for the survivors, *shimakutuba* allow the native speakers to express their thought processes freely, along with body movements, and associated remembered emotions. As *shimakutuba* is diverse, the native interpretations of war and Okinawa are also diverse. In the same space and time, there were two extremes of oppressors and oppressed. That is the reality of Okinawa, and Okinawans have long struggled to understand these polarized

extremes in native space. The gathering together of various individual narratives composes history as a community that questions who "we" are and what is the story of our *shima*. It is not a nostalgic longing for the past. This is an attempt to construct the meaning of who we are as a community collectively.

The everyday practice of native languages at the individual level prompts us to decolonize the mind as one's *kutuba* (O: language) is directly connected to life on this land and reminds us of the diversity and unique worldview that each language carries. In their practice, Indigenous languages or *shimakutuba*, are not used just for the sake of revitalization. They capture knowledge situated in specific times and spaces. They illuminate the layered Indigenous landscape. They embody how people have encountered colonialism, militarism, and modernity. Rejecting the concept of land that fixes colonial geographies and settler nation-states to control and act on Indigenous bodies, Goeman (2008, 23) argues that the land for Indigenous peoples is "a storied site of human interaction" that embraces knowledge, memory, a sense of community, and continuity. Similarly, I argue that *shimakutuba* refute essentializing Indigenous Okinawa into a single body or a fixed place; instead, they provide counterhegemonic understanding of the land as "resistance to a conception of fixed space" (Goeman 2008, 24).

While native ethnography in *shimakutuba* is a collective narrative of a history, ways of knowing, and keeping one's genealogy, the use of *shimakutuba* opens possibilities for the reconceptualization of Okinawan bodies that are not bounded by being colonizers, occupiers, settlers, colonized, victims, or natives. Instead, *shimakutuba* users are more careful to learn one's positionality in a particular place and wrestle with the colonial forces that authenticate, seal and violate Indigenous bodies and thoughts. Therefore, *shimakutuba* does not live only in the past of linear time or in space enclosed by the barbed-wire fences. They are means of everyday self-determination of storying the landscape as well as expressing Native "longing and belonging" to the land (Goeman 2008, 25).

Higa Haruka—A Resurgent and her *Shimakutuba*

When I telephoned Haruka for an interview, she told me to meet her after her *shimakutuba* class for children at the Sobe Community Hall. The class was a part of the summer educational program in Sobe community. When I got to the hall, the military officers from Torii Station, the US Army base occupying Sobe, were teaching English to the children. After the

English lesson, Haruka took over the class and started teaching *shimakutuba*. Haruka used a song from the community to make the language easy and memorable for the children.

Wakasaru tuchinee ikusa nu yuu	When I was young, there was war
Wakasaru hanan sachi yusan	The flower of youth did not bloom
Yaan gwansun uya choodee	Our houses, grandparents, parents and siblings
Kanpoo shageki nu matu ni nati	All came under attack of shooting from the battleships
Chirumun kweemun muru neeran	Our clothes, food, everything gone
Suutiichaa kadi kurachan ya	We survived from eating *suutiichaa*[28]
Unjun wannin 'yaan wannin	You and I and you and I[29]
Kanpoo nu kweenukusaa	became leftover scrap metal of the battleships

This song was written by Higa Kōbin from Sobe, and it has been performed by his four daughters. Its title "*Kanpoo no kwee nukusaa* 艦砲ぬ喰ぇーぬくさー (O: Leftovers of Naval Bombardment)" refers to survivors of the Battle of Okinawa. Higa Kōbin lost his parents, sister, and first son in 1944 when the submarine USS Bowfin attacked and sunk the Tsushima Maru, a Japanese ship carrying hundreds of children who were being evacuated from Okinawa to Kagoshima (Nakamatsu 2015). Kōbin lost his first wife and second son in an air raid in Osaka in 1945 (Nakamatsu 2015). In March of the same year, the Yomitan coast was crowded by the US military battleships. Troops from approximately 1,500 battleships and their troops invaded the island (Nakamatsu 2015). It was the beginning of the horrific ground battle, locally known as the "Typhoon of Steel." Kōbin composed a song to express his grief for his deceased family and burnt home village (Nakamatsu 2015). Four of Kōbin's daughters formed the singing group "Deigo Musume" and sang his song. In 1973 on the way back from Deigo Musume's performance, Kōbin and his second wife Shige were killed in drunk-driving incident caused by a US military serviceman (Nakamatsu 2015). The song "*Kanpoo no kwee nukusaa*" has been sung to capture the turmoil of the war for Okinawans, and also interpreted and represented as an anti-war, anti-military, or peace-prayer song (Nakamatsu 2015).

[28] *Suutiichaa* means sago palm. During the World Wars, Okinawa was plunged into a depression and experienced food shortages. These periods are locally known as "sago palm hell" because people staved off hunger by eating poisonous sago palm (Asato et al. 2004).
[29] Both *unju* and *'yaa* mean "you" in Okinawan. The former is a polite form.

Using this song, Haruka was teaching the adnominal particle "n" in *shimakutuba* and how to connect two nouns in a sentence. She drew pictures of food, taught the names, and explained the reasons why the elders ate *suutiichaa* (O: sago palm), and how it was prepared. Children in her class already knew the song. Although the children did not know the meaning of the lyrics, they could sing along to the song written about elders from their community. Haruka believes that it is her mission to carve *shimakutuba* deeply into children's hearts by teaching them the meaning of the lyrics. While Haruka enjoys teaching, she also feels frustrated when she needs to translate *shimakutuba* into Japanese in her lessons. So, she has been exploring ways to teach *shimakutuba* to the children using body movements without using Japanese.

After the class, I asked her how she got interested in *shimakutuba*. Haruka answered,

> How come? Well, as a language, there is a system, right? When I see that, I am very fascinated by its worldview. Very much. There is a world. It is very interesting. It makes me want to know more … I draw pictures. The motivation you get when drawing a picture will lead to the originality of your work, right? As you keep creating something, you know a piece of work, which is developed purely from your interest, would become a good one. So, I get motivated when I take a walk and see beautiful scenery. When I think that there are these words in this landscape, I am very thrilled. That *umi* (J: ocean) was called *'nmi* (O: ocean) when *obaa* (O: grandma) and *ojii* (O: grandpa) were young. It is interesting there was that time. Also, a banana was called *basanai* (O: banana). On this beautiful landscape, there was another layer. Illustrators call it a layer, and it's like that. It seems like [*shimakutuba*] added another layer in this landscape. I thought it was very fascinating.

Haruka started seeing a different island landscape from the one I saw as she consciously uses and converses with elders in *shimakutuba*. In front of her eyes, *shimakutuba* began to unveil layers of memories the land has witnessed. While the influence of colonialism and modernity on the endangerment of *shimakutuba* is undeniable, *shimakutuba* still carries spirits extracted from the worldviews of the people who taught us the language. They anchor us to our roots and induce us to imagine Okinawa before the land was bombed or fenced.

Everyday practices of *shimakutuba* evoke memories of the richness and abundance of this land. Haruka remembered when she went to do fieldwork in Ōgimi Village with college students led by a Japanese professor. She said,

> There are names that are used in this land. For example, there are *gama*[30] and *abu*. *Abu* extends longitudinally, into the back. That is called *abu*. On the other hand, *gama* is not vertically long, more horizontally long. So, there are place names such as Pinza-abu in which the name matches with the form. That's why I think by using this language, we could see this reality more carefully … When I told the Japanese ethnographer that it would be better to have more *Uchinaaguchi* in his research. He said, "But I am *Yamatunchu*.[31] When I go to do field research, informants kindly tell me in Japanese." I was so disappointed how brazenly he answered, and how he does not understand such "research" has spoiled [our languages] a lot. That's the worst. There must have been a lot more *shimakutuba* that children of that area heard and learned as they grew up. Such "research" and teaching have undermined [children's] possibilities to learn *shimakutuba* of the community.

Haruka realized that it was not only war and bombs that destroyed island languages. Reflecting on her own childhood, she was keenly aware of how the pressures of modernity and Japanese literacy built into a system of knowledge production undermined the value of *shimakutuba* and gradually colonized the minds of Okinawan youth. For Haruka, the use of *shimakutuba* was core to counter-narrate Okinawan landscapes. It is an approach to reconnect with the land and negate settler colonial ontology and epistemology, and it has simultaneously encouraged her to be critical from her Indigenous standpoint and to speak for alternative ways of knowing the place. By doing so, *shimakutuba* validates the knowledge of ancestors that has often been covered by the power of colonial language and literacy.

[30] *Gama* has been more commonly used and known in Okinawa to indicate a cave that people used as an evacuation shelter during war.
[31] In Okinawan languages, *Yamatunchu* refers to a person from mainland Japan. It is often used in contrast with *Uchinaanchu* (O: Okinawan people).

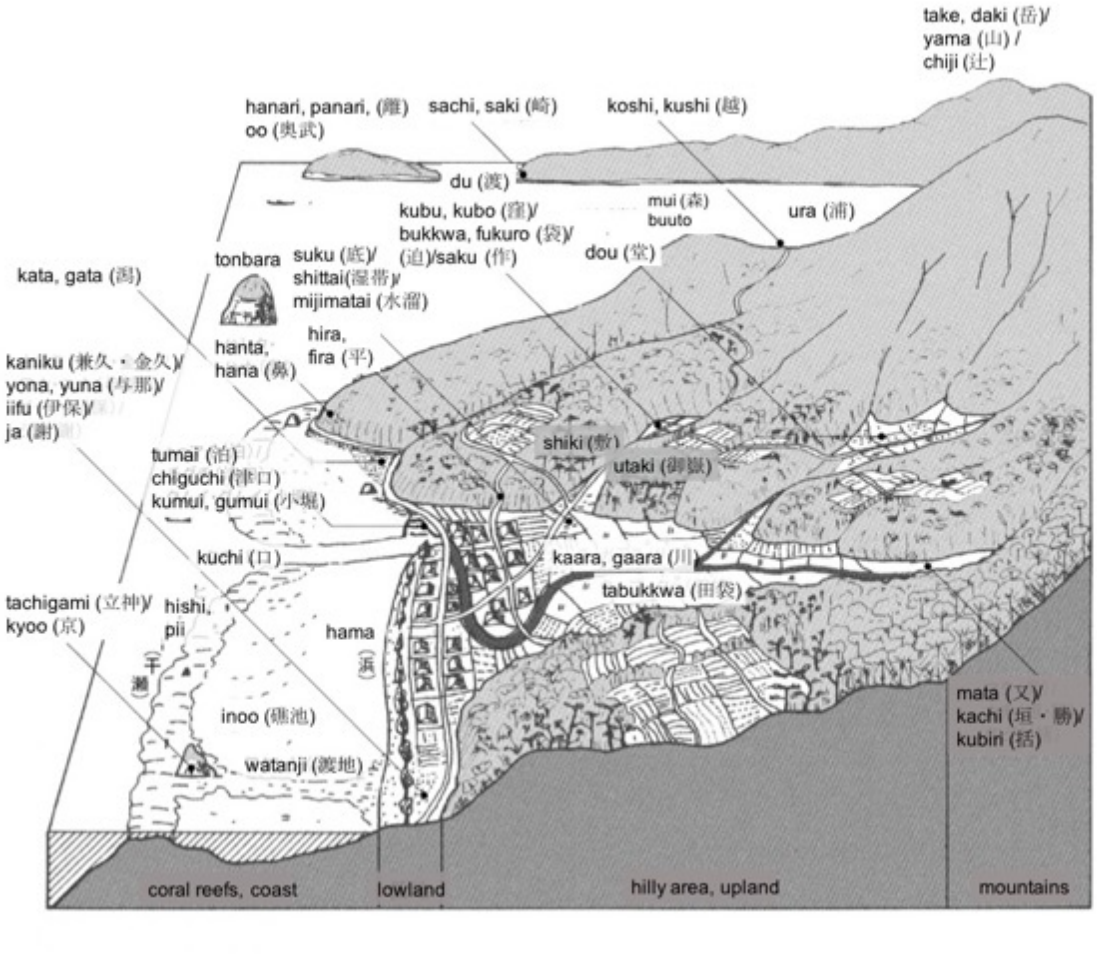

Figure 17. Some *shimakutuba* to describe landscape. Source: *Nihon rekishi chimei taikei: Okinawa-ken*, Vol. 48 (Tokyo, Japan: Heibonsha, 1979).

Limitations and Possibilities: We Can Neither Talk *Shimakutuba* nor about Wartime

In 2008, the Okinawa Prefectural Museum held the "*Shimakutuba* Art Exhibition to the Future." Haruka performed her plays in this event. The event included screening of the films and photos on "*Shimakutuba de kataru ikusa-yu* (O/J: Wartime Narrated in *Shimakutuba*)" presented by Ryūkyū-ko and a series of monologues written and performed by Higa-za. Haruka titled her performance project "*Shimakutuba mo ikusa-yu mo katarenai* (O/J: We Can Neither Talk *Shimakutuba* nor about Wartime)." She explained,

> I titled it as a response to Toyomitsu's film. If they are in that generation, this is our generation … I wanted to express my honest feeling … How can I say? Limitations. Our honest feeling of "We cannot" and "We do not know how" is one. However, there may

> be still something we can do. For example, for me, just trying to speak *shimakutuba* is so. Then I can think about war and create a story. I wanted to show this one possibility. In this way, there are two meanings in this project. Limitations and possibilities.

Limitations and possibilities are the set of two extremes in the space and time Haruka lives in. Not knowing the language limits Haruka's ability to understand and communicate war experiences and conversely, learning the language opens up the possibility of understanding the war stories of ancestors and the community in greater depth. It is not only the children of Sobe who do not know *shimakutuba*, the horror of war, or the proper way to eat *suutiichaa* (O: sago palm) to stave off hunger. For many youths like Haruka, who grew up in Okinawa during a time of abundance and relatively peace, the militarized landscape was normalized, and war is registered as a sad and depressing history of the community that should not be talked about in everyday life. Haruka recalls when the curator invited her to work on the play related to the film. "I was like… here it comes: wartime, the heaviest theme. But I thought I would not be able to do it if I do not do it now."

Haruka wrote a couple of play scripts based on Ryūkyū-ko's documentary, as well as other original scripts developed from her own ideas and stories from elders. As her play project on "*Ikusa-yu*" gained popularity and was covered in the local media, Haruka started receiving feedback from actual war survivors. The survivors would tell her, "That male character in your play would be Mr. so-and-so. He was about that age and carrying a baby on his back." Elders in the audience saw themselves in Higa-za's play. Haruka said, "It was an unexpected reaction. I feel good that I did it. However, I also feel the fear because we have not experienced war. We do not know the true horror of war. They [survivors] watch a piece of our play, and it would bring back the heaviest and deepest pain that they experienced. I feel scared."

The war that deeply wounded Okinawa did not destroy the island, the languages, or the possibilities completely. "Leftover scraps of battleship" had the strength to survive and continue their lives to the next generation. The next generation has extracted and embodied the essence of the survivors, who shared their stories despite their feelings of fear and how life weighed on them. The next generation began to re-discover and nurture their identity through these stories. Members of Higa-za, mostly in their twenties and thirties, became interested in asking their grandparents about their war experiences and expressing them in their play.

Higa-za's series on "*Shimakutuba mo ikusa-yu mo katarenai* (O/J: We can Neither Talk *Shimakutuba* nor about Wartime)" includes a play titled "Fence." While many of Higa-za's plays are fictional, and set in the past when *shimakutuba* was the language of everyday conversation, "Fence" is set in the contemporary period. One day, three local high school students were playing outside the military base, and one of them accidently got inside of the fenced area. Just like ordinary conversations among local youth, the play is performed in *Uchinaa Yamatuguchi* (O: Okinawan Japanese). Through their interaction with a yard man working near the military fence, who is an Okinawan base employee and former anti-military activist, the students start reshaping their image of the fence and their understandings of base employees. For the young students, the fence is a symbol of the partition that separates Okinawa and America. The yard man inside the military fence yells at the students, "This is Okinawa, too!" The ensuing conversation with the man on the other side of the fence helps the students to realize what the fence really separated and conjured away from Okinawa. In the last scene of the play, the main protagonist declaims her lines:

Ojisan ya miiran natan teeman
Zō ya miiran natan teeman
Uchinaa kara fensu tutan teeman
Uchinaa ya wattaankai mudusan teeman
Uchinaa uti chikati chuushee nuuyaga muru Yamatuguchaa hyaa
Jiinkai umatoohyaa nuuyaga fuhatsudan
Hachigachi kōshien kachan teeman
Rokugachi ni nuunchi atarinchi wattaaya wakatoon doohyaa
Uchinaa utiyoo kurikara ya
Fensu muru tutan tiimanyo
Uchinaa karaya Uchinaanu kutuba neeran natan tiiman yo
Uchinaa uti muru kachaa satti imikuji wakaran natan teeman
Wattaayayoo Uchinaanu kutuba chichi chandoo
Wattaayayoo Uchinaa utiyoo nuunu atarinchi nnchichandooya
Wattaayayoo Uchinaa utiyoo muru miiran natanteeman
Wattaayayaa nuunu atarinchi wakatoon dooyaa[32]

Even if the uncle is gone
Even if the elephant is gone[33]

[32] Lines were transcribed and translated by the author from the play recorded on a DVD (Higa-za 2011).
[33] In the play, the characters mentioned a 1973 news story about a missing elephant that has never been found; it remains a mysterious unsolved case.

Even if the fence gets removed from Okinawa
Even if Okinawa does not get returned to us
What have been used in Okinawa? All Japanese language?
What have been buried in the land? Unexploded bombs?
Even if we win at Kōshien in August[34]
We know what happened in June[35]
Even if all the fences in Okinawa get removed
Even if Okinawan languages disappear from Okinawa
Even if everything gets disturbed and nothing makes sense
We have listened to the languages of Okinawa
We have seen what happened in Okinawa
Even if everything gets lost
We know what happened

The "cultural bomb" thrown on to the land and the people of Okinawa changed Indigenous lifeways, established boundaries, and added another layer of contemporary Okinawan life. Examining Hawaiian knowledge of the sea and the (re)-construction of identity, Karin Ingersoll (2016, 32) argues, "A person or practice is 'indigenous' not solely because of a connection to geographic place or cultural space but also because of how these places and spaces are interpreted." For Okinawans, *shimakutuba* is the historical and political link between identity and place. Everyday practices of *shimakutuba* help Okinawans to recreate Indigenous identities in continual reconnection with the land and their ancestors. This knowledge validates the voices and experiences of Native Okinawans and deconstructs colonial perspectives of the landscape and ways of knowing the land.

As my final question in my interview, I asked Haruka what she wants to do in the future. She replied,

> The most important thing for me is to think only about *obaa* (O: grandma). I hope that would take shape in some way. I do not care about those vigorous men's political intentions and stuff. I do not care. I care about the feeling of *obaa*. Why do they give us a look like that? How do they feel when they speak this language? I want to synchronize myself more with them. That was the original point when I started *shimakutuba* play. It may be a moment out of many of my performances. I want to synchronize my feeling with their feeling. Then I hope someone in the audience would see and understand "*ikusa-yu*" (O: wartime) from my reproduction of it.

[34] Kōshien refers to Japan's national high school baseball tournament held twice in a year. The Summer Kōshien is held in August.
[35] June, more specifically June 23, is the Okinawa Memorial Day called *Irei no hi*. It is a public holiday observed in Okinawa to commemorate the lives lost during the Battle of Okinawa.

For Okinawans, *shimakutuba* also links the past to the future. As *shimakutuba* touch elders' memories of oppression and suffering, they remember the power of life. They make the youth realize how their births and lived experiences overcome the ravages of war. *Shimakutuba* reconnects one's interpretation about life to the land and evokes powerful possibilities among youth with which to channel and express "Indigeneity" with their voice and body movements.

Conclusion

Everyday practices of *shimakutuba* serve as means of decolonization and resurgence. The examples of Ryūkyū-ko and Higa-za in this chapter show how Okinawans recommit to decolonizing their minds and imagining alternative relationships with the people and the land. I have argued that the use of *shimakutuba* is not be merely used with the goal of Okinawan language revitalization. Rather, it is a form of spatial decolonization that embodies historically and culturally situated knowledge about the place and the people while reflecting the complex perspectives of class, gender, age, and locale. Examining native narratives and *shimakutuba*-related activities reveals the power of *shimakutuba* for us to redefine Indigenous relationships to the people, the land, and the community. *Shimakutuba* functions as a catalyst for the regeneration cycle of Indigenous Okinawa.

Haruka and I kept driving around Yomitan as my interview with her continued. It was a scorching summer day. At this place seventy-one years ago, it must have been hotter than it felt in 2016. We cruised around the neighborhood and enjoyed finding a new road and an old out-of-business small store. As we were driving on a rough back road between sugarcane fields, Haruka suddenly started singing out loud to herself.

Unjun wannin 'yaan wannin	You and I and you and I
kanpoo nu kweenukusaa	are leftover scrap metal of the battleships

Goeman (2013, 37) has argued, "Native stories speak to a storied land and storied peoples, connecting generations to particular locales and in a web of relationships." In Okinawa, *shimakutuba* has been a true witness of stories of the land. Just as the continuation of peoplehood matrices perpetuates relationships to specific home lands, *shimakutuba* maintains and creates Indigenous space through the retelling of native stories. Despite settler military space-making in Okinawa that continues to impose colonial geography and languages, all of these works to stubbornly insist on an Indigenous presence and relationship to the land. Understanding *shimakutuba* narratives and re-approaching our way of knowing is important and promising for

the successful Indigenous resurgence to create a new set of relationships to the world and to ensure liberation from mental and spiritual subjugation. In the next chapter, I examine how tacit farming maintains an Indigenous presence on land occupied by the military.

CHAPTER 4

Tacit Farming and Mapping Ancestral Footprints

"*Mokunin* (J: tolerated) …" Machida Haruo stared grimly and did not finish the word. Instead, he continued, "Here is all the old Sobe community. Residents were forcibly evicted in 1951. That is why… after all, people were forcibly moved out … So, people, who till the soil now … most of them [till] the land where their houses and farmlands were before." After his answer, I felt embarrassed that I had casually told Haruo that I was interested in *mokunin kōsakuchi* 黙認耕作地 (J: tacit farming sites) without carefully thinking what the word meant for him. Despite my ignorance about the struggles of tacit farmers, Haruo and his wife Reiko kindly escorted me past a barbed-wire fence and showed me their neatly cared for vegetable garden.

"Tacit farming sites" or *mokunin kōsakuchi* are the US military sites where land cultivation by native farmers has been tolerated. Barbed wire fences often surround the areas with signs that indicates the US military authority over the zones. Other *mokunin kōsakuchi* display signs saying that the land is the property of Okinawa Defense Bureau.[36] The tacit farming site I entered with Haruo and Reiko was inside the US Army Garrison in Yomitan, which is also known as Torii Station. So-called "tacit farmers" or *mokunin kōsakusha* 黙認耕作者 are people who engage in farming land that is officially occupied and controlled by the US military.

Exploring the politics of tacit farming, this chapter demonstrates how everyday engagement in land-based activism redefines the militarized space and re-maps the Indigenous landscape. By tilling the soil, planting seeds, and praying for a good harvest, the Okinawan relationship to the land remains alive and regenerates itself despite being impacted by the settler colonial authority of military control. Historically, tacit farming was a food growing strategy for war survivors who were evicted and thus deprived of their subsistence. As Okinawa became relatively proficient in feeding its people, the meaning of Okinawans engaging in land-based practices has changed. Their land-based practices now not only take the form of Indigenous resurgence and renewal of commitment for the future (Corntassel 2012), but they also show how

[36] The Okinawa Defense Bureau handles military related affairs and actions in Okinawa as a local representative of the Japanese Ministry of Defense.

Indigeneity transcends the fences and shapes an alternate geography that the colonial power has tried to partition while dispossessing native people. Jeff Corntassel (2012, 97) argues, "If colonization is a disconnecting force, then resurgence is about reconnecting with homelands, cultures, and communities." Tacit farming in Okinawa is a practice of Indigenous resurgence that brings disconnected life elements together. The land that tacit farmers stand on and care for is a channel for actions by individuals as well as communities which protect their relationships with the natural and sacred world.

This chapter discusses the historical emergence of tacit farming in Okinawa, mostly practiced in the central part of the island. The history of Okinawa land struggles is relatively well documented in Japanese publications by journalists, scholars, public entities, and related organizations and interest groups. However, the stories of tacit farmers have received little scholarly attention. I first historicize the emergence of tacit farming in the context of the militarization of the island and land dispossession from the native people. Then, I examine the contemporary situation of tacit farming with questions such as: Who are the tacit farmers? What do they grow? Why do they farm? How do they manage the site? How do they understand the land through farming practices? What are their concerns while continuing their farming practices? I introduce stories of tacit farming locations in two Yomitan communities—one site surrounded by fences in Sobe and the other in Kina without fences. Overall, this chapter highlights the cultural and spiritual connection to the land that is embedded in practices of tacit farming by second-generation landowners and farmers.

Emergence of "Tacit Farmers"

Tacit farming is an activity that is intrinsically linked to the postwar politics of the military occupation of Okinawa. Okinawan historian Arasaki Moriteru (1995, 46) explains tacit farming sites as follows:

> Tacit farms were tolerated by the US military as they had a hard time with farmers' resistance to land seizure. It is military land. The land rent is paid to Okinawan landowners. However, as long as farmers do not obstruct the military facilities and activities, the United States endures the landowners cultivating the land inside the military bases.

In Okinawa today, the practice of tacit farming is seen in the central part of the Island, including Yomitan, Kadena, and Okinawa City, where the military bases and residential areas coexist in a

suburban space. While more recently the central government authority and the military news media *Stars and Stripes* use terms like "illegal occupation" (*Okinawa Taimusu* 2004) and "base farmers" (Tritten and Sumida 2013) to describe tacit farming, it is important to stress that tacit farmer is not an identity according to local norms. The war and the subsequent prolonged military occupation in Okinawa have made villagers "tacit farmers." Some farmers cultivate the land, which is located inside fences, some sites are located along the fence, and other farms are in an open area "occupied" by the US military.

In the aftermath of war, the US military occupation claimed certain spaces and converted farmlands to bases. The US military first occupied the former Japanese Army bases on the island while accommodating villagers in Displaced Person (DP) camps (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). The military bulldozed vacant devastated areas and then expanded its occupation as if the Americans were merely drawing lines on a blank map (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). Displacement of the people from their native land occured as the United States built political and legal frameworks of occupation around Okinawa.

In militarized communities like Yomitan, where ninety-five percent of the village was occupied, villagers were not allowed to return to their homes until August 1946 (see fig. 9 in Chapter 1; Kobashigawa 2006), and the practice of tacit farming emerged concurrently with the reconstruction of villages. Among twenty-two *aza* in Yomitan, Namihira and Takashiho were the first communities to which villagers could return (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969).[37] On November 20, 1946, the first group of approximately 5,000 villagers returned to Namihira and Takashiho (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 77). Confined to a small space, displaced villagers were concentrated at high population densities until the military released other areas. Expecting more people would return to their home communities and to rebuild the home village, villagers formed a team called *Yuntanzan-son-kensetsu-tai* 読谷山村建設隊 (J: Yuntanzan Village Construction Team[38] ; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). Upon villagers' return from the camps, the Village Construction Team first opened a small shared field for farming (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 80). As more people were released from DP camps, the Village, under the direction of the United

[37] Currently, there are twenty-three *aza* in Yomitan. *Aza* Osoe was established and added in 1985.

[38] The Village changed its name from Yuntanzan-son 読谷山村 to Yomitan-son 読谷村 in 1946. Yomitan Village elders explained that the reason for the name change was to dispel the negative, "uncivilized" images that were associated with Yuntanzan (Yomitan-son Yakusho, 1969, 74).

States Military Government of the Ryukyu Islands[39] and after the Military Government had occupied a large area, allocated the leftover land for residences and farming to avoid confusion among returning villagers (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969, 80). This was a temporary measure taken by the Military Government for Okinawan residents, who had lost access to former residences and farmland due to the military occupation and displacement (Taira 2009; Tochiren Sanjū-shūnen Kinen Henshū Iinkai 1989; Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). These allocated lands were "leftovers" after the United States had taken what they wanted for military bases. Villagers focused on reconstructing their living space while dispossessed villagers struggled to find land to cultivate and alternate sources of livelihood (Yomitan-son Yakusho 1969). The process of Village reconstruction shows that postwar land use planning in Okinawa was preceded by the violent land acquisition and occupation by the US military even though there were bottom-up efforts for rehabilitation by villagers. The tragedy of WWII and the following chaotic conditions were used to legitimize and carry on the settler military occupation in Okinawa.

In 1951, the San Francisco Peace Treaty separated Okinawa from Japan and kept the Ryukyu Islands under US military control (United Nations 1952). The treaty made it possible for the United States to legally obtain "the right to exercise all and any powers of administration, legislation, and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants of these islands, including the territorial waters" (United Nations 1952, 50). However, it should be noted that the United States did not propose a trusteeship system of Okinawa that would encourage self-governance or independence; instead, it maintained its provisional governance by establishing the United States Civilian Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR).

Because of turbulent world affairs at that time, the United States intended to fortify and enhance its strategic military presence on Okinawa to the point that Okinawa was called the "Keystone of the Pacific" (McCune 1975). There are several measures that the United States took to retain the "war trophy." The first legal measure taken by the USCAR regarding land use was the Ordinance No. 91, *Authority to Contract*, on November 1, 1952. This ordinance promised legal leasing documents for and rental payments to individual property owners. However, a tiny amount of rent and twenty-year leases did not appeal to many native landowners

[39] The government in Okinawa from 1945 to 1950. It was replaced by the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyu Islands (USCAR) in 1950.

(Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006).[40] Difficulties in obtaining agreements from Okinawan landowners made USCAR apply force to ensure the land use for the military (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006). In 1953, USCAR followed up with Ordinance No. 109, *Land Acquisition Procedure*. The US Army Civil Administrator added a foreword describing the political situation at that time:

> Whereas the United States has certain requirements concerning the use and possession of land in the Ryukyu Islands and whereas there are no provisions of Ryukyuan law whereby such requirements may be satisfied, it is deemed appropriate and necessary to establish procedures for the acquisition of and just compensation for such interests in land as the United States must have for the carrying out of its responsibility in the Ryukyu Islands.

Then Article 2 proclaimed:

> When it has been determined that an estate or other interest in any specific parcel or parcels of land or other real property shall be acquired, and that such acquisition cannot be agreeably accomplished by negotiations with owners concerned, the Deputy Governor, in the name of the United States, shall cause the following to be accomplished.

Ordinance No. 109 was a major problem for Okinawans because it legally reinforced "the right of the United States to file a Declaration of Taking" (USCAR 1953). In 1954, USCAR announced that the process would be to make a lump-sum payment of land rent for the use of land for sixteen years. This rental would be paid to landowners at a rate set by the US military (Arasaki 1995, 31). This legal backing legitimized the US military's further land seizures using bayonets and bulldozers through the discourse of it being a "war necessity." In the meantime, the military land seizure unleashed anger among native landowners and farmers, evoked a sense of crisis, and encouraged them to protect their land (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006).

The property seizure by bayonets, bulldozers, and money gave rise to the land struggle among Okinawans, which is known as the first wave of the "all-island-struggle" in Okinawa (Tanji 2006). Okinawan landowners formed an interest group called *Tochiren* 土地連 (J: the Landowners Union) in 1953 as an organized form of resistance against the forcible land acquisition of private properties by the United States (Tanji 2006).

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[40] The rent of the land set by the US Army was one B yen (currency under USCAR) per 3.3 square meters for a year. At that time in Okinawa, a bottle of Coke cost ten B yen (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006).

In the early 1950s, violent land seizure in Isahama and Ie Island by the US military generated farmers' "legendary" reactions. Tanji (2006, 53) described them as non-violent, non-ideological, and livelihood-based protests. Tanji (2006, 68) analyzes the protests as drawing attention to "the often remarkable courage and creativity, resourcefulness, and resilience of the poor and powerless facing apparently all-powerful opponents." While the socio-economic disadvantages of farmers in rural Okinawa was a major contributing factor for farmers to protest and protect their land from militarization, their understanding of and belief in what the land could provide underlay their resistance (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006). Examining this early stage of the land struggle, Arasaki (1995) argues that the source of these farmers' unyielding spirit for the land is in *nōhon shugi* 農本主義 or "agriculture-is-the-base-ism." Farmers believe in the magnificent power of the land that produces life, and they have an endless commitment to the land (Arasaki 1995). Although the military had bulldozed the land, destroyed houses and farm crops, and fenced off residents, native farmers did not give up on farming, even in surrounded by military jet planes (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006).

The military occupation of Okinawa created a space for a new military-related economy to grow in agrarian villages. Dispossessed farmers needed to find new means of supplementing their income. Having little or no access to their land, some families left their home villages and moved to cities, and others became base employees (Takagi 1967). Consequently, the number of full-time farmers dropped significantly. Many landless farmers lost their way to make a living and emigrated to Bolivia.[41]

In Yomitan in 1967, seventy-four percent of the entire village was controlled by the US military (Takagi 1967). Despite losing control over the land, not neglecting the land led to tacit farming, and sixty-three percent of cultivated lands were "tacit farms" (Takagi 1967). Due to land dispossession, most villagers, who once were full-time farmers, became part-time farmers. One fourth of Yomitan residents at that time engaged in blue-collar work on the base. However, among these farmers, there was something similar to what Arasaki (1995) described as the farmers' unyielding spirit for *nōhon shugi* (J: agriculture-is-the-base-ism). In December 1967,

[41] Postwar emigration to Bolivia was planned, promoted, recruited and selected by the Government of Ryukyuan Islands, which was an Okinawan subjacent organization from 1952 to 1972 under USCAR.

Asahi Shimbun published a feature story about an Okinawa laborer. Iha Shinichi, a daytime base employee, worked in his cane field on the base at night. Iha commented,

> We are farmers. I go to work on the base because our field was taken by the military … We used to have 2.6 hectares of land, which was all taken for the military base. Here is also the army base in fact. However, the military has not used it yet, so I grow sugar canes. We do not know when the military will reclaim this area. Until then, I farm (Takagi 1967).

For many native farmers, who made a life out of agricultural work, it was difficult to give up their land for such small compensation. "*Kane wa ichinen tochi wa mannen* 金は一年 土地は万年 (J: Money lasts one year; the land lasts 10,000 years)." With this slogan, farmers persistently expressed their resistance against the land seizure and military occupation (Arasaki 1995; Tanji 2006). Tacit farming was clearly their survival strategy, which was underpinned by farmers' strong trust in the land as their life source.

Although farming was the main economic activity in rural households, postwar reconstruction and development over several decades changed the landscape of militarized communities. Moreover, aging of the original landowners and decreasing farming populations is typical of tacit farming in recent years. The latter section of this chapter includes stories of tacit farming currently in Yomitan. The following section describes how the military occupation affected agrarian practices and how Indigenous communities responded by farming to meet their political, economic, cultural, and spiritual needs and connections. While fixed barbed-wire fences moved the villagers' workplaces and living space, the land remained as an indispensable component of individuals' and communities' well-being.

Tacit Farming with Fences

"In Sobe, people who engage in agriculture mostly [farm] in Torii Station. The space inside the base was the basis of our livelihood," Ikehara Takashi, a leader of *aza* Sobe community, said. After apologizing for not being familiar with agriculture, Takashi hesitantly agreed to be interviewed and signed a research consent form. Takashi started, "In Sobe's case, our community's geographical locale is itself a reallocated area, which was created after the war." Entering the Sobe neighborhood, one easily understands what Takashi meant. Unlike other communities, the Sobe neighborhood is crammed with houses side by side and narrow roads with many parked cars. Far beyond the fence of Torii Station, which separates Sobe, one can see

military facilities in a vast field and the two national flags of the Stars and Stripes and the Rising Sun swaying in the breeze. With a special entry permit with a facial photo (see fig. 18), tacit farmers go through a "farmer's gate" of Torii Station every day to water and take care of their gardens.

Figure 18. An entry pass for a tacit farmer. Photograph by the author.

It was 1947 when Sobe residents were allowed to return to their homeland. Before the war, the total area of the Sobe community was approximately 253 hectares (626 acres) (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 86). Farmland made up 72 percent of the total area, as most villagers cultivated cash crops such as sugar cane and subsistence crops like sweet potatoes, various grains, and vegetables. There were twenty-two wells for drinking water in the neighborhood. Upon receiving approval to return to the homeland, the people of Sobe set out to rehabilitate their community. An ethno-historiographical compilation of Sobe community *Sobe-shi* records a description from this time.

> On April 10, 1947, two years after leaving the community, we finally could return to our home.
>
> However, when we returned, there were no old houses. There were no trees surrounding the houses, no stone walls, wells, or holding ponds. Everything was gone

> without a trace. Moreover, roads and the venerable *kuragaa*[42] were destroyed, and gravel had been dumped onto the vast farmland. It [the area] is not what it used to be. It changed into the US military facilities, got destroyed and became wild land.
>
> However, for a human being, there is nothing more precious than life. We appreciated our lives after having close scrapes during the war, and celebrated the return to the land; the villagers reclaimed the wasteland with a hoe in hand (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 100).

Returning home from DP camps brought a feeling of reassurance to many villagers. However, it was a fleeting happiness since resettlement in the homeland was only temporary.

On May 15, 1951, USCAR ordered an eviction of the Sobe community for base construction (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). Despite residents' many petitions and sit-in protests against the eviction, the US military began surveying the land and building new facilities (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). Facing the crisis of losing the living space again, the community negotiated and reluctantly agreed to the terms proposed by the military. The agreement included: (1) the military prepaid a displacement fee of eighty-three dollars per household; (2) the military arranged transportation for the moves; (3) the military laid piped water in the relocation area; and (4) the military permitted villagers' farming of any area that they did not use (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999, 102). For a self-sufficient agrarian community like Sobe, the loss of the land was debilitating. Having enough space for farming was a crucial factor in the negotiation to maintain the villagers' livelihood. After the military claimed the Sobe land, there was only a small portion of it remaining for the villagers. Villagers used the military survey to reallocate 3,013 square feet of land per farming household for a total of 380 households (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). The new residential plots were decided by lot (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999).

The establishment of the barbed wire fenced space increased distresses among members of the orderly community. More than the war damage to the land, the loss of access to the land caused the villagers grave concern about future life in Okinawa with the US military presence. One day in 1954, a theft occurred at Torii Station. The US Army closed its gate and shut tacit farmers out of their farmland for over two years. Eighty-two-year-old active tacit farmer Ikehara Gen'o recalls,

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[42] *Kuragaa* is a name of a water well, which has been considered sacred in Sobe community. *Kuragaa* is currently located in Torii Station.

> We were in trouble not being able to cross at the gate. We were growing sweet potatoes to feed pigs. We grew many crops. Since we lost the source of our income, we could not pay any tax. We had to buy food for the pigs from somewhere else. We could not pay any tax. It was hard. Pigs became very thin ... Now we get the land rent, but we did not get any money at that time. ["Even the land rent?"] *Abe! Chiryoo mo neesan gutu, hajimewa.* (O: Eh! There was nothing like land rent, in the beginning).

After the incident and the gate closure, the community had to act like they were "good neighbors" with the Army. Tacit farmers and the community then developed their own strategies to negotiate with the military occupier. Gen'o continued, "The captain at Torii changes every couple of years. When a commander changes, a rule changes too." No matter how disadvantaged their situation, the community made efforts to demonstrate their need to the Army. They would, for example, claim the necessity of gathering firewood for their stoves and repeatedly directly petition to have access to the land. These were non-violent strategies of survival and resistance by the villagers. In a state of food shortage and poverty after the war, farmers' resistance required patience, persistence, and determined minds. Their actions did not necessarily appear as forms of protest, rather, they were what James Scott (2008) calls "everyday forms of peasant resistance."

Currently, the tacit farmers of the Sobe community are mostly elderly, retired, part-time farmers. Only a few are full-time farmers. With the aging of the original landowners, some are second-generation farmers who inherited the land from their family. Gen'o told me that it became difficult for landowners to obtain entry permits, although the Sobe community had requested permits be issued to all Sobe residents. Tacit farmers apply for their gate entry permits through the community board. As time passes by, the villagers feel that their access to the land has been more restricted than before, especially after September 11, 2001. Gen'o continued,

> We always negotiate with them. Even the current policy to open the gate only for one hour three times a day. There was an opinion [from the community] to carry out a protest demonstration. However, if we do that … [and] if they [the Army then] decides to close the gate to shut us out, it is over. If they close the gate, it is over. Your gardens, if you neglect the land and do not take care of it, the land gets ruined.

Previously, tacit farmers did not need to go through the gate, carry a permit, or work within time restrictions. The modern system of surveillance has constrained the villagers' land-based subsistence practices, alienated them from their ancestral land, and lessened face-to-face

interactions with the military "neighbor" in the community. A retired elementary school teacher Reiko also noted in a slightly skeptical tone, "Now it is very strict. What-do-you-call-it … ID? They take our fingerprints and everything! I think we have been monitored how many times we get in." After her retirement, Reiko started farming with her husband on the land they inherited from their family. As someone who has spent most of her lifetime in Sobe, Reiko surely noticed the tension that the military brings to the local community. The fence and the Army obstruct native farmers' peaceful practices and non-violent interactions with the militarized land.

Examining militarization and resistance in Wai'anae, O'ahu, Laurel Mei-Singh (2016, 22) argues that military fences separate "people from their lifeways" and divide people geographically, historically, and economically. This feature of separation can be found in Yomitan as well. However, in Yomitan's case, separation is never complete. Indigenous connection to the homeland transcends the fence, which never completely alienated native people from the land. Although the fence marks the physical separation and dominance of the military over the land, the native farmers never relinquished their claim to the land or agreed to be culturally and spiritually displaced. Indigeneity here reminds us that fences are not permanent nor complete. Indigeneity goes through and extends beyond the fence and re-imagines the militarized landscape.

In the summer of 2014, Reiko and her husband Haruo took me inside Torii Station and showed me their "tacit" farmland. Although the landscape inside the fence was mostly covered with vast sugar cane fields and vegetable gardens, there were the remains of houses and big Okinawan-style tombs that made me keenly aware of the previous presence of the Sobe community. "Do you want to go to *Uganju*?" Reiko asked me, referring to a place of worship, as we went around the tacit farming sites in her small car. As a former elementary school teacher, Reiko remembered the time she took pupils inside the Torii base on a school excursion and showed them the community's sacred places. "*Kabigingaa*. Here is *kaa* (O: a water well)." She pointed out and continued, "Places where *kaa* were ... spring water used to come out of the ground. Here, there is no more water. It's all dried out. There are always plants, *shinboku* like this." I asked, "What is *shinboku*?" She said, "It's *yorishiro*. It's an object to which spirits are drawn. There are usually [*shinboku*] at *uganju* (O: a place of worship). Villages were located facing towards these tall trees [and *uganju*]" (see fig. 19).

Figure 19. *Shinboku*, a tree to which spirits are drawn, in a tacit farming area in Sobe. Photograph by the author.

In Sobe, elders call the community settlement before the displacement "*furu-Subi"* (O: old Sobe) and the current ward after relocation "*mii-Subi"* (O: new Sobe). In *furu-Subi* which is now partially enclosed within the military barbed-wire fences, there are eleven sacred sites for prayer. Ten out of the eleven sites are currently located inside Torii Station. According to local folklore, these sites are considered sacred because of the abundance of water and suitable *feng shui* placement. While land-based belief and practices have become simplified, these sacred sites in Sobe have been protected by the hands of volunteer farmers like Gen'o, Haruo, and Reiko. Gen'o says, "We negotiated [with the Army] when they tried to build another facility here. We told them they cannot build here on sacred sites and asked them to move. I think ... Americans, if we tell them, they would respect our praying sites. I think those English signs were set up by the Army" (see fig. 20).

Figure 20. *Kabigingaa*. One of the sacred places in the tacit farming area inside Torii Station. Photograph by the author.

For Sobe villagers including tacit farmers, their feelings toward the Army seemed to be mixed. While strong attachments to their ancestral land and resentment about land seizure and occupation will not likely disappear anytime soon, farmers and villagers acknowledge the importance of respect, negotiation, and communications with the Army as their neighbor, which is the result of complex international affairs. Rather than anger, humanistic values and devotion to human welfare are deeply ingrained in everyday land-based practices, especially among elderly villagers and tacit farmers who survived the war and postwar poverty. Another research participant, Higa Haruka, and I talked in a friendly manner together, "You know, those *ojii* (O: grandpa) and *obaa* (O: grandma) who farm, fish, and know how to live on the land. ... They can complete their livelihood on their own. They have such strength. They do not allow themselves

to give in to power." Not giving in to the powerful. The strength and resilience of Indigenous farmers is like bamboo, stable and durable. It can regenerate to its previous size, allowing it to withstand more stress regardless of the ideologies of power that brought war and hunger on them.

At the tacit farming site in Torii Station, infrastructure andl buildings such as the irrigation system are not allowed officially because the land is under Army authority. Outside the fence, tacit farmers are not recognized as "farmers" meaning they are not eligible for farmers' insurance and other occupational benefits. Although tacit famers work out of the reach of public facilities and the civil services, they have "tacit" ways of surviving on the land. Putting their money together, for example, tacit farmers in Torii purchased an electric generator to run an agricultural equipment and pumped up water from a natural well to sprinkle on farm plots. The Sobe people keep the land active communally and alive through farming. For example, some base landowners have informally let their neighbors use their plot when they do not want to farm, or the landowners are too old to work on the land. Neighboring farmers accept and use the plots with no money involvement. Both landowners and tenants say that they do it because the land should not be neglected and should be taken care of. For tacit farmers, the land is not just a source of income. Rather, tacit farmers deem the land to be a life source, and therefore taking care of the land has become the breath of life for the community. The land title often functions in name only. At least, the land title is held strategically to stop the military development.

The fenced enclosure of the Sobe land has made displaced villagers and "tacit" farmers seem vulnerable and victimized. However, their persistence and their real strength of being able to feed themselves are important practices that should not be taken for granted. The agency and micro-level self-determination of many villagers is worthy of attention because of their contributions to holding the community together, feeding themselves, and keeping the land and the community healthy physically and spiritually.

Tacit Farming without Fences

The Kina community is located on the east side of Yomitan Village. Located along Route 58, which runs north to south on Okinawa Island, Kina has historically been known as a key transportation point. In 1853, when Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States Navy visited Ryukyu to conclude the Treaty of Amity between the Ryukyu Kingdom and the United

States, Perry stopped at a station in Kina, and a description of the place was recorded in a drawing by one of his crews (Kina-shi Henshū Iinkai 1998).

Just like Sobe, the landscape of the Kina community drastically changed after WWII. The military occupation of Kina and displacement of the residents also took place during the time period when villagers were detained in DP camps. After release from the camps, the Kina community residents were pushed to the west side of Route 58 (see fig. 21 and fig. 22). The once thriving community was divided by Route 58 and the Kadena Ammunition Storage of the US military occupied the east side of the street. The Storage Area replaced and covered the forest where villagers used to gather firewood. From the street, the east side still seems to be untouched bush. However, behind the bushy zone, the tacit farming site stretches along the road. If one goes further to the east, one finds a barbed-wire fence separates the land and keeps unpermitted villagers out of the area.

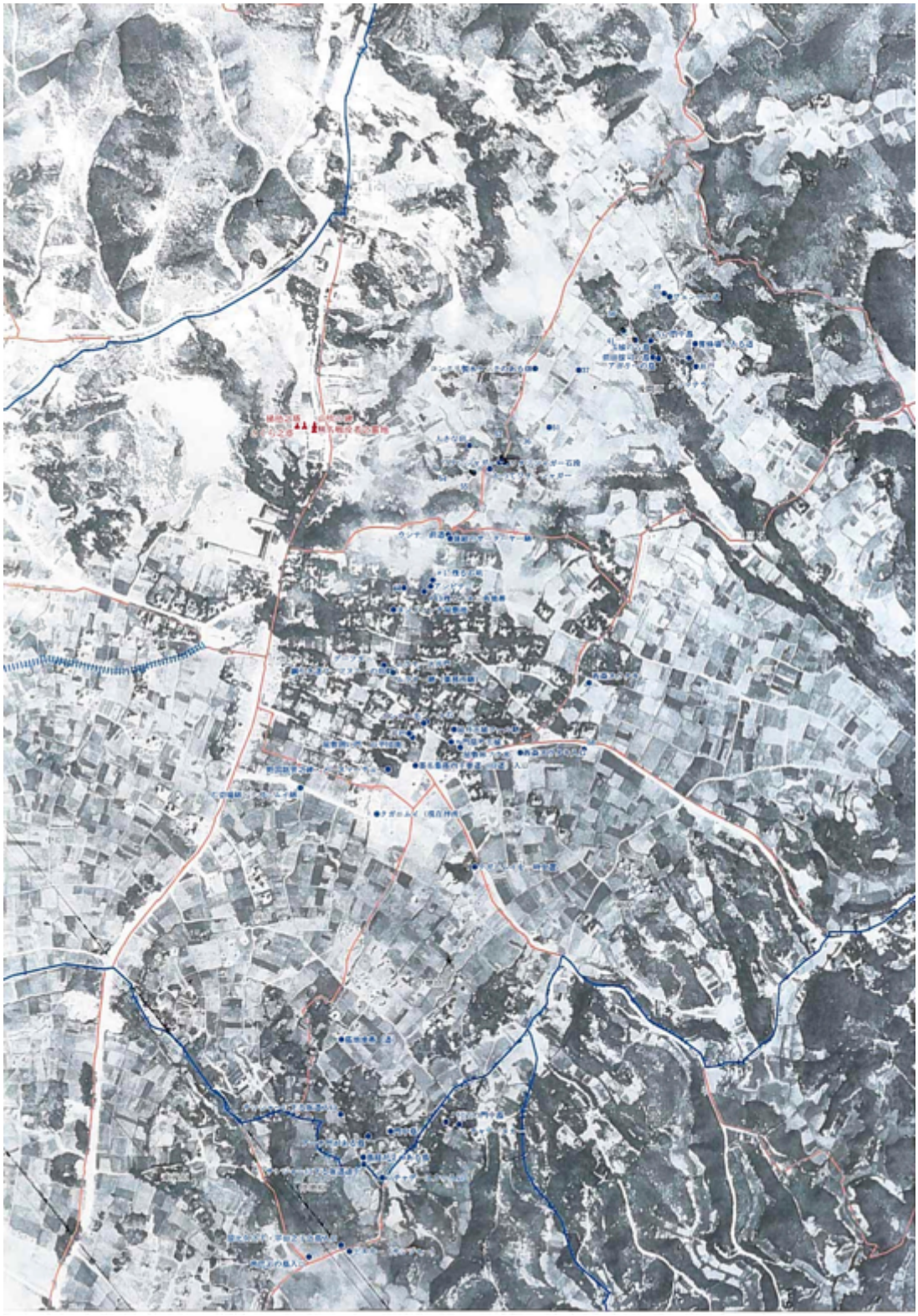

Figure 21. An aerial photograph of the old Kina community, taken by the US military in February 1945. Significant landmarks are marked and labeled in blue. Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

Figure 22. An aerial photograph of the tacit farming area in the Kina community as of 2015. A blue line is the *aza* boundary. Courtesy of Yomitan Village.

"For most of the people in Kina, agriculture is not to make a living. Villagers start farming at the Ammunition Storage Area after their retirement. Over there … was originally our homesteads and not so vast land. [Our community] cannot even implement land improvements and farmland maintenance [at the tacit farming sites]." *Aza* Kina community leader Matsuda Yasuo described the agriculture of the community. Tacit famers in Kina are mostly men in their sixties or above, who are retired and enjoy farming as a hobby. Some are landowners, and some are tenants who rent plots to farm. Just like the tacit famers in Sobe, the landowners receive the land rent from the government. Villagers grow various kinds of vegetables such as *Yamaimo* 山芋 (J: Japanese yam) for themselves and to share with others. Every December, announcement signs for the "*Yamaimo Suubu*" hosted by each *aza* community are displayed at prominent places throughout Yomitan Village. *Yamaimo Suubu* is a competition of yam size and weight among farmers in the community and with farmers from other *aza* communities; a champion is selected by vote. The event is many farmers' favorite and has served to foster good *aza* relations in this agrarian village.

The only difference in the tacit farming situation here, when compared with the Sobe community is that there is no fence in Kina. There is no entrance permit; tacit farmers can freely enter the area to take care of their plots. One early summer day in 2016, I had an opportunity to walk around and visit sacred sites in the tacit farming area guided by elders of the Kina community. We intended this tour to be a visit to multiple sacred sites, which included traditional resource areas, ceremonial areas, historically significant places, mythological places, burial sites, and spirit residences. The tour started from the station *Kina Banju*, a historic site where Commodore Perry visited, crossed Route 58, and proceeded to three signs in front of the tacit farming area (see fig. 23). One of the signs read, "WARNING US AIR FORCE FACILITY UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY IS PROHIBITED AND PUNISHABLE BY JAPANESE LAW." Another sign said in Japanese, "WARNING Regarding the illegal use of the land." The last sign in handwriting stated, "Entry is prohibited except farmers." We passed these interestingly overlapping claims over the space and arrived at the open field with parceled and cultivated plots. Since there are no buildings or obvious landmarks, it is difficult for an ordinary person to orient him/herself in the field without guidance by elders or tacit farmers.

Figure 23. The tacit farming area in Kina and three signs. The sign in Japanese handwriting says, “Entry is prohibited except farmers.” Photograph by the author.

As soon as we entered the tacit farming site, we encountered a monument to Noguni Sōkan 野国総官 (J: Ground Council of Noguni), who introduced sweet potatoes to Okinawa Island in 1605, which saved the islanders from starvation. While it is not known when the original monument was built,[43] the monument was moved a few times because of the military occupation. *Aza* Kina community members regularly visit and take care of the monument. In the community, there is a customary ritual, called *'nmu usumee suukoo,* to pay respect and appreciation in front of the statue.

After the monument, we passed by the zone that tacit farmers called "Yamaimo Apartment." Many small mountains or "houses" of yams are lined up in this area, and waiting to be dug by farmers, who are looking forward to the competition over the biggest yam at *Yamaimo Suubu*. The community leader Yasuo pointed to a field and said, "This is my plot over here. Over there is Mayor Ishimine's. Mayor got the biggest yam last year." Just from the way they talked about their farm plots, I could tell how much they enjoy farming and how farming has been a part of peoples' interactions and community building. Beyond their yam plots and sugar cane fields, there was a goat shed and a man. As we passed by the shed, we waved at him in greeting. The man looked curiously at our group and raised his hand back to us. It was just like an ordinary scene of interaction in a rural village, except I was in "tacit farms" and these farmers are often considered "illegal occupiers." This deceptively peaceful village scene is one of potential conflict with the largest military force in the world.

For many residents in Kina, farming is a post-retirement hobby or an additional source of income. Because most of the tacit farmers in Kina are part-time small landowners, it is helpful for the elders to have additional sources of income besides their pensions. While elderly landowners receive the land rent, having the land to work on provides them with a purpose in post-retirement life. "When you get older, you will know the fun and the value of agriculture. You do not know it when you are young. You don't know." The "President" of Yamaimo Apartment, also known as "Dr. Agriculture," Higa Shūtoku repeatedly told me to simply start farming rather than conducting research about it.

[43] There is a well-known statue of Noguni Sōkan in Kadena. Born and raised in Noguni where currently occupied by the Kadena Air Base, Noguni Sōkan first brought potatoes back to his hometown and spread them around Okinawa. For convenience to visit and admire him, villagers of Yomitan built a monument respectively in their community.

Following our tour guide, Mr. Kiyuna, from the community, we walked further east. Mr. Kiyuna was very knowledgeable about the old Kina community and historical significance of the area. In addition to sacred places, villagers also have tried to restore sites such as *murayaa* (O: a community house), *saataayaa*[44] (O: a sugar house), and *ganyaa*[45] (O: a coffin house) that played important roles in the prewar Kina community. Once one learns about these remaining walls, hills, and wells and then imagines the historical landscape, it is obvious that the loss of the land was not just a physical loss. For Kina villagers, it was separation from their entire village and their lifeways which are intimately connected with this land.

Indigenous connection to the land is not defined only by natural resources but is also represented in their customary rituals and spiritual worship. Every sacred site we stopped at, Mr. Kiyuna would explain this place enshrines this god; this altar is facing this direction towards Shuri[46]; men are not allowed to enter at the east side of *utaki* (O: a sacred grove), and so on. While reasons for their "sacredness" differ depending on places, each site had a simple altar-like structure to offer water and incense sticks.

Approximately one kilometer from Route 58, Mr. Kiyuna stopped at the front of the fence. After murmuring that "This is the gate that I feel annoyed at," he told me that old graves from the Ryukyu era are scattered in the bush on the other side of fence. This place, which is called *Kenendō* 慶念堂, is known as the hiding place of the Shō royal family during the biggest coup d'état in the Ryukyuan history, which took place in 1469 (Kina-shi Henshū Iinkai 1998, 307).

With the knowledge of this history, the bush I saw through the holes of the barbed-wire fence suddenly changed its energy. I felt the wind roaring from the other side of the fence, and I got goosebumps on my arms. When I joined this tour, I expected that I would learn about the landscape of the Kina community before the military occupation. However, I had not expected I would learn about the connection with the Ryukyu Kingdom, which was overthrown a century and a half ago. Villagers' cultural and spiritual connections to the place were deeper and stronger

[44] *Saataayaa* means a sugar house. Each community had work place(s) with a sugar compressor shared and used by community members before an industrial sugar mill was built (Kina-shi Henshū Iinkai 1998).
[45] *Ganyaa* is a house to make coffins.
[46] Shuri was a capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom.

than I had initially thought. Despite the series of displacements and relocations, villagers there have always worked to preserve the sacred sites of their community.

In the reconstruction process of the home village, for the native villagers, protection and governance of the sacred sites have laid a spiritual groundwork that founded and supported the community in a different realm from the basic infrastructure. The ontology of the communities does not consist of only the physical and geographical orientation and governance; rather, it is a living space that embraces polysemic worldviews and even transgresses the boundaries of the non-human world. This way of remembering and reclaiming space is counterhegemonic in the ways that they emphasize Indigenous relationality to the land. What I thought might be "Indigenous," "traditional," or "historical" no longer stays static in the past or exists only in material form. Indigeneity here is cosmological, which includes the land, the people, and the spiritual. Through telling and retelling of stories, Indigenous connection to the land in this space is maintained, fortified, and cherished.

While villagers and tacit farmers in Kina wish to reclaim their old village space for self-governance and non-military land use, it is ironic that many farmers and the community itself are also still heavily dependent on land rent. For example, half of the Kina community income is from renting the community-owned land to the military. Tacit farmers and the community leaders worry about their sources of revenue. Yasuo looks forward to a newly renovated Kina Community Hall to be more accessible for residents and said,

> After all, the ideal is different from the reality. People would say, "You can build houses for your second and third sons." But even if the land is returned, it might take another ten or twenty years to prepare the soil. Moreover, we will not have any income for that long time … Of course, if we can, we would like to go back to our ancestral land. We have the desire to return. But because there is no other way now, then, we would like to receive some sorts of assurance.

Control of the land by the military has created a set of tangled relationships of the Indigenous Okinawans with the land, the neighbors, and the future generations. While many wish to return to their homeland, reconstruction of postwar villages alongside the bases and fences created a space for the military to substantially contribute to supporting some communities financially. Unlike the postwar poverty period, the land itself does not provide sustainable financial security to landowners and communities whose livelihoods are entangled in

a modern capitalist economy. The practices of modern farmers are driven by their desire to maintain a garden city with stories that connect today's generations to the past and the future. Everyday access and acts of tacit farming become a reminder for villagers themselves to appreciate various life sources and elements together. If colonization and militarization attempts compartmentalization of Indigenous ontological relationships with the natural world (Corntassel 2012), tacit farming is one practice of Indigenous peoples to sustain their Indigenous lifelines.

Conclusion

Tacit farming practices generate three concluding thoughts. First, they historically served as a primary strategy of survival for Native farmers who were dispossessed by the military occupation. Farmers then were keenly aware of the importance of the fertile land to feed people, support the basic economy of many households, and pass their livelihood from the land to the next generation. After the horrible sacrifice of many lives during the war, survivors managed to keep bodies and souls together. For rural villagers, feeding people every day was the primary motivation to continue farming. Ahagon Shōkō (1982, 123), a legendary peace activist from Ie Island who organized "the Beggars' March,"[47] writes, "It is shameful for us to beg for food and money. However, the US military, which took our land away and made us beg is more shameful."

Historically, farmers' resistance under the US occupation was not necessarily anti-US as their protesters' rules state. A few items out of the eleven in these rules are the following: do not become anti-United States; sit down when meeting; do not hold sticks, hooks, or ropes when meeting with the US military; keep in mind that we, farmers as producers, are superior in humanity and need to enlighten military men, who are destroyers (Ahagon 1982, 50). These farmers' attitudes do not seem stirred up by feelings of hostility or of being completely victimized. At least among farmers, farming is not an activity to be tolerated by the US military. It is an everyday practice of reconciliation and regeneration for the future regardless of enemy or ally, landowners or landless peasants. Tacit farming is an outcome of Native farmers' strong belief in the land as the producer of humanity.

[47] The Beggars' March was a non-violent demonstration by farmers from Ie Island. From July 1955 to February 1956, farmers from Ie Island marched on Okinawa Island to protest land seizure by the US military.

Second, tacit farming practices show how the violent encroachment and the modern system of military enclosure created highly twisted relationships and coexistence of the foreign Army and Indigenous communities. Displacement, land seizure, and land rent negotiations changed the ways villages reconstructed and rehabilitated the community politically and economically. Local communities, which host the bases, directly and diplomatically interact with the foreign Army in accessing and sharing the same space. "When we sneaked past the fence and smuggled things out of the base, Okinawans used to say, 'we took the loot home!' We did not call ourselves thieves. We had pride," former mayor of Yomitan Yamauchi joked in a proud manner. In their eyes, the legality of military occupation is foreign. No matter whom they are countering, farmers and villagers did not and have not yielded their land. Monetary dependence on military-related subsidies and incomes is an undeniable fact for elderly tacit farmers and "host" communities. While the military occupation alienated people from their traditional lifeways in an agrarian community, tacit farming reflects the flexibility and persistence of farmers and villagers. These are active ways of life and much more than symbolic political gestures of resistance.

Finally, tacit farming practices sustain the Indigenous landscape of militarized Okinawa. The telling and retelling of stories about the space, and the marking and remarking of sacred sites by tacit farmers challenge the separation that the military fence attempts to create. Farmers remember water springs and their ancestors' reverence for nature and spirits. In the eyes and hearts of many tacit farmers, barbed wire fences do not alienate or partition them from their ancestral land completely. While the military officially holds authority over land use and land access, in native farmers' eyes, the military occupation does not reach deep enough to break Indigenous traditions and relations to the land.

Tacit farmers raise the question: "What action has been tolerated on this land? By whom?" Unlike the military, tacit farmers do not see or relate to the land merely as a physical, geographical, or material site of occupation. Self-determining acts of farming provide and cultivate the ground for sustenance while holding the community together on the land that existed before militarization. Tacit farming is thus a counterhegemonic response to the military occupation. Tacit farming constitutes everyday acts of Indigenous resurgence to continue, reclaim, and restore cultural and spiritual connections to the land that have been disrupted by the military.

Pictures of Tacit Farming Sites

Figure 24. Tacit farming site along Kadena Air Base, the largest US Air Force Base in Asia. Photograph by the author.

Figure 25. *At the center*, tacit farming site; *right*, an Okinawan tomb; and *afar*, military facilities. Photograph by the author.

Figure 26. Mr. Kiyuna explained a sacred site in tacit farming area of the Kina community. Photograph by the author.

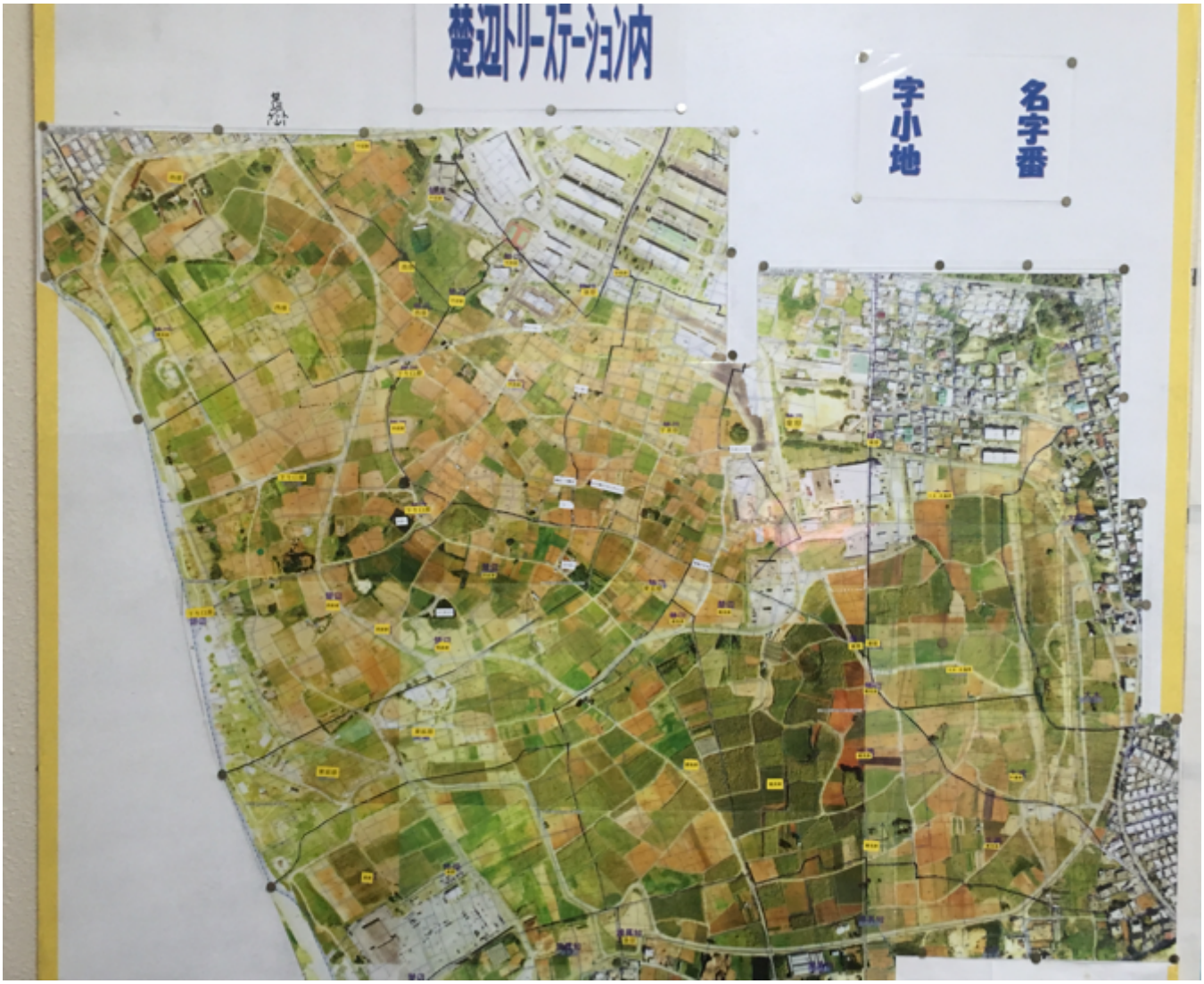

Figure 27. *Aza* Sobe created a map of *furu-Subi* (old Sobe before WWII) lapping over an aerial photo of the US Army Garrison Torii Station. Place names are yellow-marked, and sacred places are white-marked. Photograph by the author.

CHAPTER 5

Re-claiming Farmscapes: Indigenous Resurgence in Cooperative and Commercial Farming

"Have you ever farmed? You should try it at least for a bit. It gives weight to your words. When you get older, you will learn the joy of farming, and you will appreciate it. When you are young, you do not know. You do not understand when you are young." Higa Shūtoku looked at me and said these words in a half teasing way and half serious manner. This happened in November 2015, when I attended a community meeting with the village assembly representatives at *aza* Kina Community Hall in Yomitan. After the debriefing session, the meeting naturally shifted to an informal interaction between the representatives and the community residents over local beer and freshly caught sashimi. I was sitting surrounded by men in their sixties and above, who were talking to each other joyfully in their *shimakutuba*. A couple of ladies, who had also attended the meeting disappeared from the room before anyone noticed. Curious about this new face, who could be their daughters' or granddaughters' age, with an interest in agriculture, the elders handed me a beer can and started telling me about how tough it is to be a farmer in Okinawa. Higa continued,

> Agriculture is the base of a country. Culture is *bunka*. Agriculture means *tagayasu* 耕す, to cultivate. So, cultivating becomes the cradle of civilization. That is how the four great civilizations emerged, right? ⋯ from the place where there was agriculture. Agriculture, even if it is in decline, it should not be abandoned. The Japanese government had turned away from agriculture for industrialization ... that was wrong. Their teaching was bad. [They taught people] to look down upon farmers and construction workers. *Dikiyaa* (O: smart people), who wear a tie, sit around in a room with AC, are good. They tell you that you could only be *hyakushō* (J: farmer) if you do not study. But we cannot live without them [those who make food and build houses].

As I nodded along, I looked around. I was still the only "young" person in the room. I was talking to senior farmers, who had retired from salaried jobs and were enjoying their post-retirement life by farming in their hometown. They are the men of the generation who struggled to make Indigenous space under the political transition from the US military occupation to the Japanese administration. Having been active in village planning and community functions, these men are proud of belonging to a community, besides their work-related networks. They are small-scale farmers, with garden-sized plots for vegetables and fruits destined to be consumed by

local households. These farmers love having a small manageable plot and taking care of the soil and their vegetables as if they were caring for their grandchildren.

This chapter explores the local agricultural life of Okinawa as a form of Indigenous politics particularly through the analysis of three actor types: village, smallholders, and commercial farmers. Through the postwar land dispossession and repossession, and thus the transformation of the rural economy, Okinawan villagers have sought to sustain farming. This chapter considers farming as a way to manifest an Indigenous Okinawan life while participating in the capitalist economy. Historically, colonial-capitalist accumulation and exploitation have transformed Indigenous social and economic infrastructure. Limited or no access to the land and natural resources trigger Indigenous peoples' claims for their rights to self-determination. In settler societies, when Indigenous communities are successful economically, the settler state may then react to their political and economic power as if the community is no longer authentically Indigenous. Jessica R. Cattelino (2010) calls this the double bind of exercising economic and political sovereignty. I argue that farming in Okinawa is not just a means of rural livelihood for economic reasons but a deliberately chosen and determined action by villagers to cultivate close relationships within the community, assure one's agency in keeping hold of the source of one's livelihood, and actively engage in Indigenous land-based economic activities. While Okinawan agricultural actors have changed their farming practices to adopt new challenges "by working with, against, and in between" the existing political system and market-based agricultural economy (Trauger 2014, 1146), this does not mean they are no longer Indigenous. Working within the structure, Okinawan farmers are subject to simply being represented and classified as "peasants," which is closely associated with the concept of Indigeneity, i.e., traditional, pre-modern, and anti-capitalist. However, Okinawan agricultural actors themselves consciously intend to prioritize and secure controllable forms of land use and make their own decisions about their economic practices on their ancestral lands.

Finding Indigenous Voice in Capitalist Accumulation

In a political economy, the agrarian question is usually about the transformation of peasants working the land then turning to commodity-producing labor when capitalism takes over agricultural contexts. Whether the question is still relevant or not under the global food regime (Fairbairn 2010; McMichael 2009a) and industrialized food production system, Yomitan's agrarian transition of land repossession and land reform suggests the need to rethink

farming and farmers. A prominent scholar of peasant studies, Philip McMichael (2009b, 288) argues that the agrarian question today is "about the political history of capitalism," which "is embedded within processes of capital accumulation." In settler colonial studies, David Lloyd and Patrick Wolfe (2016, 113) remind us of the intersection and continuation of primitive accumulation, colonial domination, and military occupation which formed "practices of the neoliberal state that have emerged to regulate and promote a new regime of capitalist accumulation."

Furthermore, in Indigenous studies, Glen Coulthard critiques the violence of dispossession and the process of capitalist exploitation through a reading of Marx's *Capital*. Coulthard (2014, 7) writes,

> In *Capital* these formative acts of violent *dispossession* set the stage for the emergence of capitalist accumulation and the reproduction of capitalist relations of production by treating Indigenous societies, peasants, and other small-scale, self-sufficient agricultural producers from the source of their livelihood—*the land* … it forcefully opened up what were once collectively held territories and resources to privatization (dispossession and enclosure), which, over time, came to produce a "class" of workers compelled to enter the exploitative realm of the labor market for their survival (proletarianization).

Coulthard remind us that Indigenous anti-capitalism is "deeply *informed*" by how Indigenous people tend to view "land *as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations* (2014, 13, emphasis in original)." In this chapter, I follow Coulthard's critique of the violence of dispossession and explore how to think about the Indigenous resurgence. Rather than arguing that resurgence must always be anti-capitalist, I ask whether farming could allow for sustainable self-determination in the existing capitalist system and whether, in Okinawa, doing so may be a way to overcome the double bind of exercising economic and political self-determination.

As described in other chapters, Okinawa, like many other Indigenous communities in the world, has experienced violent dispossession and entry into the exploitative labor market. Meanwhile, the persistent land-based practices of the Okinawan villagers have demonstrated a series of space transformations of Indigenous dispossessions to Indigenous repossession.

Arguing that "[c]olonial dispossession ... was always, more generally, a removal from indigenous agency and a silencing or marginalizing of the voices that animated that agency," Jeffrey Sissons (2005, 142) stresses the complex ties of colonization, capitalist development, and disempowerment of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, "[t]he processes of colonial appropriation

and indigenous repossession are always also transformation" (Sissons 2005, 140). Drawing upon his argument, I first suggest the premise that the process of Indigenous Okinawan repossession and resurgence is in transformation and not always *anti*-capitalist. While capitalist development has overwhelmingly transformed Okinawan life ways, my inquiries lie in revealing dilemmas of rural farmers' agency in ways in which they re-configure and re-appropriate the meanings and significance of farming in capitalist economy.

Making Agrarian Space in Yomitan

After Okinawa's reversion, the Okinawa Promotion Special Measures Act accelerated infrastructure building and urbanization of the island, aiming to fill the socio-economic gaps between Okinawa and the mainland of Japan (Asato et al. 2004). While the government subsidizes villages and towns in Okinawa to redesign according to urban and resort development models, Yomitan did not lean towards commercial development. Despite the influence of rapid urbanization, it was unique that Yomitan did not attract military-related or external commercial capital for economic development. Rather, Yomitan committed to maximizing social and environmental improvements through the promotion of agriculture. It has continued to increase in population and demonstrate positive outcomes of these rural revitalization effects. Instead of being an underdeveloped agrarian village, Yomitan has become a location where urban people seek an alternative lifestyle in a modern economy with a well-balanced nature and suburban composition in its landscape.

The Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA), with branches throughout the country, are unique to Japan. The JA was first established along with the process of postwar land reform and food management in 1947. The JA's involvement and influence in agrifood policy making are different from the characteristics of a "farmer's co-op" in the United States (Kimura and Nishiyama 2008). In contrast to those in Europe and North America, the size of Japanese farms is relatively small, and most JA members who engage in farming activities are part-time and have an additional source of income from working full-time in factories or offices (Kimura and Nishiyama 2008; Nihon Nōgyō Shinbun 2016). Nevertheless, the JA historically acted as "the representative" of the farming sector in agricultural policy making and became a powerful lobbyist organization (George 1981). While the JA manages credit unions and supports farmers' and associate members' economic life by offering services such as life insurance and causalty insurance, the JA's principle of "mutual help" includes guidance in agricultural management,

joint purchasing of agricultural production materials, joint marketing of agricultural products, and providing mutual aid programs (Nihon Nōgyō Shinbun 2016).

In Okinawa, many of the local agricultural committees that existed prior to reversion were co-opted by the JA network. With these political ties, a regional branch of the JA Okinawa has maintained a strong presence in country areas like Yomitan where the focus is to protect and promote farmers and agriculture. Upon implementation of Yomitan's agricultural land use planning, the JA brought an understanding of commercial agriculture and business to take the lead in Yomitan's farming sector. For example, as described in Chapter 2, after Yomitan Village had successfully repossessed the former military airfield, the Village, in collaboration with the JA, built infrastructure to promote agricultural production. Yomitan designated 169.2 hectares (72.8 percent) of the reclaimed land as the "Advanced Agricultural Group Area" and set up a market information center, a marketing and processing factory, a nursery and agricultural research facility, and shared farm machinery (see fig. 5 in Chapter 1; Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2005). Furthermore, the JA offers training and financial support to new farmers, especially young farmers who intend to make farming their full-time occupation.

Chapter 2 examined Indigenous space making and how Yomitan villagers applied and articulated Indigeneity to make legitimate claims for restitution of control over the land from the state and the US military. This chapter shifts this inquiry into "agrarian" space-making and farming actors. In 1994, the largest agricultural dam was built in Yomitan to hold water for farm use (see fig. 5; Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2000). The former Bolo Airfield on the west side of Yomitan has been transformed with land improvements and is now largely planted in sugar cane and chrysanthemums (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2000). The former Yomitan Airfield at the center of the village is now village-owned and named the Advanced Agricultural Group Area. Yomitan Village instituted a plan to reallocate seventy percent of the area for agricultural use to reclaim the land (see fig. 5; Okinawa-ken Nakagami-gun Yomitan-son 2014). Working together with the JA, Yomitan built infrastructure to promote agricultural production that suits the subtropical climate and soil characteristics of the area (Okinawa-ken Nakagami-gun Yomitan-son 2014).

Agriculture in a small island economy like Okinawa has never been easy. Long before Okinawa's economy became dependent on military and state-subsidized development projects, agriculture was central to the economy and people's cultural identity. In 1923, approximately 64

percent of farming households in Okinawa engaged in sugar cane production (Ryūkyū Seifu 1989, 380). In *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*, Wendy Matsumura (2015) examines the process of capitalist development in Okinawa under the formation of the modern Japanese nation-state as a way for Okinawans to negotiate their political aspirations and antagonism to national dominance. Matsumura explores the ways in which Okinawa's small peasants lost their land and confronted dispossession in the early 1900s with the Land Reorganization Projects. There were three key moments in which peasants expressed their opposition to transformation of their labor: in the attempts by Okinawan intellectuals to unify Okinawans and Japanese; in the initiatives for economic nationalism by local industrialists; and in the introduction of local industrialists and mainland sugar capitalists to the small peasant community in the periphery (Matsumura 2015). Small-scale farmers withstood both the introduction of the Japanese sugar industry and local industrialists, who strove for Okinawan capitalism. Small-scale farmers' resistance against Japanese capitalists and the Okinawan bourgeoisie is "a significant act of anticapitalist refusal that obstructed the transformation of their work and lives into dead labor" (Matsumura 2015, 145).

The agricultural landscape in Okinawa has significantly changed since then. The shrinking agricultural production shows that farming is no longer seen as competitive or sustainable to support the island's economy in the contemporary interconnected world. How can an Indigenous community, which placed its hope in agricultural promotion, practice economic self-determine in capitalism? This was my initial question. However, if Okinawan Indigeneity co-emerged with the capitalist economy, should Indigenous futures be envisioned as antithesis of capitalism? Instead, I now want to modify the question. How have Yomitan villagers configured Indigeneity in the context of a capitalist system? How have they sought economic self-determination?

Drawing upon Frantz Fanon's analysis of the anticolonial bourgeoisie, Matsumura (2015) explains the "multiple masks" which Okinawan elites wore as they faced the dilemma of Okinawa's incorporation into Japanese society and the establishment of capitalist relations. Applying the same type of analysis, later in this chapter, I discuss "a hundred names" as a tactic that farmers continue to use to resist their total submission to the government-led, capitalist-driven agricultural economy and to maintain their political and economic autonomy. In the following, I discuss how Yomitan villagers have created agrarian space in seeking more

attainable economic autonomy through rural development. While all three agricultural initiatives I examine in the following section act locally, they are different in their typology and scale. Examining engagement by local government, individuals and corporate groups, I hope to highlight the social structure underpinned by shared—yet distinctive—understandings of land-based practices.

Outline of Current Agricultural Scene in Okinawa

The total land area of Okinawa Prefecture is 228,100 hectares; 17 percent of the entire area (38,200 ha.) is arable land (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017a). Of this, upland fields take up 98 percent (37,400 ha.), and paddy fields are only 2 percent (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017a).[48] According to the 2015 Census of Agriculture, the number of agriculture management entities[49] in Okinawa is 15,029, and 14,648 (97%) of them are family-owned farm management entities[50] (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b; Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017). Among these agricultural management entities, the number of incorporated management entities which operate as corporate entities based on the Companies Act is 429, an increase of 66.3 % since 2010 (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017).

In Okinawa, 67.6 % of the agricultural management entities cultivate less than 5 hectares of land (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017). While the average cultivated land area under management per entity is 2.5 hectares in mainland Japan, it is 1.7 hectares in Okinawa (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017). In Yomitan Village, 590 out 3,517 hectares (16%) are upland fields (Yomitan-son 2015). There are 244 agriculture management entities, the majority of these entities are non-corporate operations (233 entities are family-owned and managed), and 213 (87 %) of them cultivate lands of less than 2 hectares (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017).

Okinawan farmers call a small-scale, house-garden sized plot "*atai gwaa*." However, a "gardener" is not the typical way to describe smallholding farmers. In the Okinawan language,

[48] In mainland Japan, approximately 46 percent of the total arable land area is upland fields (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017a) and over half is lowland irrigated paddy fields.
[49] An agricultural management entity means that the farm manages an arable land area of 12.14 hectares (30 acres), with agricultural product sales amounting 500,000 yen, or operation under a consignment agreement (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b).
[50] Family-owned farm management refers to entities consisting of a single household (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b).

regardless of one's vocation, a person who farms is called "*harusaa*," which literally means a farm (or land) person. The Japanese term "*hyakushō* 百姓" is often used to refer a person whose agricultural production is commercial. Likewise, farming (J: *nōkō* 農耕) is not a synonym for agriculture (J: *nōgyō* 農業) as an economic underpinning of the community. While the former connotes the socio-cultural aspects of agrarian livelihood, the latter emphasizes its economic aspects involving labor networks of marketing, processing, distributing, and consuming.

According to the 2015 Census, the number of farming households in Okinawa Prefecture number 20,056. Commercial farm households comprise 71 percent of these (14,241 households), and 29 percent (5,815 households) are self-sufficient farm households (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017). Among commercial farm households, 34.9 percent (4,966 households) are business farm households[51]; 18.3 percent (2,605 households) are semi-business farm households[52]; and 46.8 percent are side business farm households.[53] In Yomitan, 225 are commercial farm households, and 118 of them (52%) are business farm households (Okinawa-ken Kikaku-bu 2017). Although the severe natural environment which includes frequent typhoons makes agricultural work in Okinawa difficult, agriculture persists as a major means of support for local communities and the prefectural economy, especially on remote islands (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017a). Also, various agricultural products grown in the subtropical climate have significantly contributed to promotion and development of the Okinawan tourism industry (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017a). Cultivated crops comprise more than 50 percent of Okinawa's agricultural output and have a significant position in the agrarian economy. Industrial crops include sugar cane with 39 percent of the total (19.6 billion yen), followed by vegetables at 24 percent (12.2 billion yen), flowers such as chrysanthemums at 21 percent (10.7 billion yen), fruits at 11 percent (5.7 billion yen), and others at 5 percent (see fig. 28; Okinawa Sōgō

[51] Business farm households have over 50 percent of their household income earned from agriculture with one or more individuals aged under 65 years old who farm for six days or more in a year (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b).
[52] Semi-business farm households earn less than 50% of their income from agriculture with one or more individuals under 65 years old who farm for six days or more in a year (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b).
[53] Side business farm households have no individuals under 65 years old who farm for six days or more in a year (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b).

Jimukyoku 2017b). Notable is the lack of rice production which would comprise a large proportion in other prefectures.

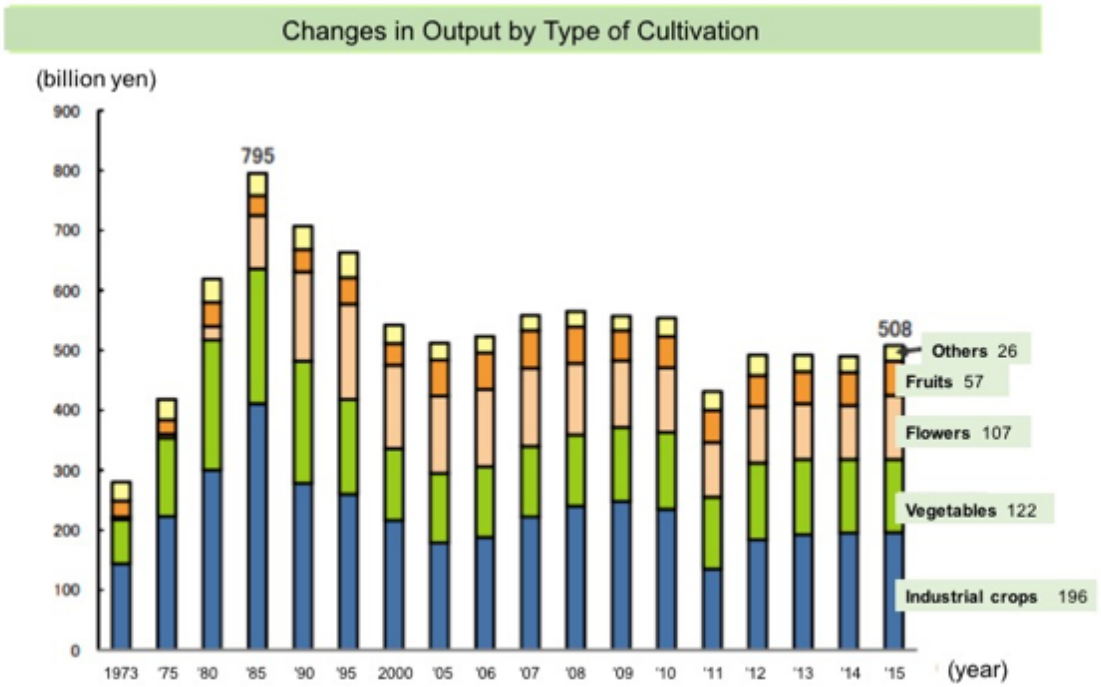

Figure 28. Changes in agricultural output by cultivation type. Source: *Heisei 28 nendo Okinawa nōrin suisangyō no josei hōkoku* (Okinawa-ken Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017b).

Rural Revitalization and the Sweet Potato Village

As postwar Japan became industrialized and enmeshed in the global food system, the issues of aging, depopulation, and a stagnant economy severely affected Japanese farming households and rural communities. Rural communities have developed various strategies to revitalize a stagnant economy. Many of these rural development projects encourage local branding that connects unique characteristics to a particular geographic area. Communities have created such "local-ness" with foods, drinks and reimagined national and local identit(ies) (e.g. de St. Maurice 2014; Kingsbury 2014; Knight 1994; Love 2013; Moen 2002).

Historically, sugar cane and sweet potatoes have been key agricultural products for Okinawa. While sugar cane production constituted the bedrock of Okinawa's export industry as well as serving as a cash income source for farmers, sweet potatoes were the basis of Okinawan

subsistence as they were the staple food for people and domestic animals (Asato et al. 2004; Ryūkyū Seifu 1989). The first appearance of sweet potatoes in Okinawa was in 1605 when a Ryukyuan diplomatic official serving on the trading vessel *Shinkōsen* (see fig. 2 in Chapter 1), Noguni Sōkan, brought sweet potatoes back from Fujian, China (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.). Domestication of sweet potatoes began in his hometown and eventually spread throughout the island. In 1609, the Satsuma Domain gained ascendancy over the Ryukyu Kingdom, and the Ryukyu suffered from exploitation. As economic ties increased between Ryukyu and Satsuma, sweet potatoes were spread to Satsuma as *Satsuma-imo* (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.). Since this time, local leaders in Okinawa devoted their efforts to expanding cultivation and improving sweet potato cultivars throughout the island to overcome any food crisis. Accordingly, Okinawa is now known for having a large variety of sweet potatoes (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.). The Prefectural Agricultural Research Center preserves approximately 320 cultivars of sweet potatoes and develops improved stock (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.).

Since 1988, Yomitan Village has made efforts to recover its local economy, which long depended on military-related income, through agricultural products. While sugar cane had become most Okinawan farmers' main crop, Yomitan Village was known for high quality soil suitable for sweet potato production (Aza Sobe-shi Henshū Iinkai 1999). Yomitan paid marked attention to sweet potatoes as the signature farm product, hoping for revitalization of the village economy (Yamauchi 2014). As the local government, the JA's regional branch, and the commerce and industry association came together and organized various events around the common purpose of rural revitalization with the purple sweet potato, Yomitan encouraged the promotion of "*Yomitan Beniimo*," registered as cultivar *Miyanō No. 36* (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.).

Promotion of *Yomitan Beniimo* was successful. The field acreage and yield amount of sweet potatoes in Yomitan increased from 35 hectares producing 675 tons in 1988 to 70 hectares producing 1,304 tons in 2012 (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2013b; Yomitan-son 2015). With the increase in production, local confectionery stores focused on developing products from small, damaged, unsellable potatoes to reduce food waste, and create other profit avenues. Yomitan food retailers developed various kinds of sweets and snacks such as sweet potato chips, sweet

potato ice cream, sweet potato tarts, and so on. These locally processed and branded products appeal to tourists, who are looking for souvenirs and local products to take home as gifts. Because Okinawa prohibits the export of raw sweet potatoes to prevent transmission of disease and insect pests, the marketing of processed goods at department stores and the airport further promotes the branding of *Yomitan Beniimo*. The Agricultural Department of Yomitan Village noted that the best part of the revitalization with sweet potatoes was strengthening connections along with the collaboration of all sectors from primary to tertiary industries (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.). In 2004, the prefectural government recognized Yomitan as a major base for sweet potato production, and "Sweet Potato Village" became a new and honored label for Yomitan. By connecting sweet potatoes with a specific locality, the economic revitalization of Yomitan through the localized agri-food network empowered its producers and fabricated new meanings with a historical sense of place and identity.

The collaborative efforts made by various village sectors encouraged production, promoted sweet potato distribution, and expanded its consumption. The promotion effects appeared not only in the market but also in the fields. Utilizing expanding sweet potato fields, the Sweet Potato Production Council invited pupils to work in the field and experience potato digging. The number of students visiting Yomitan for potato harvesting has increased from 200 in 1985 to 20,000 a year in 2004 (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Yakuba Nōgyō Suishinka n.d.). Moreover, the Council worked with the public schools' lunch program and developed menus with sweet potatoes for students. Their intention was to emphasize the local food culture and enhance children's food literacy by providing locally grown products (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2015). In this way, sweet potato promotion in Yomitan has led not only to economic profit in the community, but also to new land-based educational opportunities that connect the generations through locally produced food.

The successful resurgence of the local economy has been so significant that it transformed the unfavorable associations of sweet potatoes. When Yomitan first launched the promotion of sweet potatoes, there was hesitation and resistance from the community members. Elders would say that they preferred eating rice over sweet potatoes, stating that "I ate too many potatoes growing up" (Yamauchi 2014). Their memories of eating "too much" sweet potato made them want to avoid the vegetable, a reminder of poverty.

Under US-occupied Okinawa, this unfavorable image was widely shared in a statement of *Imo-hadashi ron* イモ・はだし論 argued by Nishime Junji, who was a conservative, pro-US candidate for the first direct election for the Chief Executive of the Government of Ryukyu Islands in 1968. Nishime made an assertion against anti-US military reformist candidate Yara Chōbyō (Toriyama 2009). Nishime claimed that if Okinawa relinquished the military base, the people would go back to the old lifestyle of walking barefoot (J: *hadashi*) and eating only sweet potatoes (J: *imo*) (Toriyama 2009). Nishime emphasized the poverty of the prewar Okinawan economy, and how the military base-related income had improved the living standards of Okinawans (Toriyama 2009). His argument had political repercussions among civilians demanding Okinawa's reversion to Japanese administration without the military bases. While Nishime's argument represented the military-dependent reality of Okinawan society at that time, the election resulted in Yara Chōbyō's winning and serving as the Chief Executive and the first Governor of Okinawa Prefecture after reversion. *Imo-hadashi ron* is still used by political conservatives to stress Okinawa's economic dependency on the US military and to complicate the military base-local economic relationship further.

Nevertheless, Yomitan Village has shown the possibility of overcoming *Imo-hadashi ron* by re-inventing tradition and re-constructing local food culture. *Yomitan Beniimo* serves an important role as an agricultural product as well as an accelerator to renew the vitality and viability of the village, which was slow to develop. Sweet potatoes have become a new medium to link farmers and consumers, to counter urbanization, to embody the local culture and to symbolize Indigenous efforts to renovate agri-food connections.

Smallholders and Chisan-Chisho

Since the late 1990s, Chisan-Chisho 地産地消 (J: local production and local consumption) movements have focused on the localization of agriculture. Key objectives of the movement are: promoting trust between food producers and consumers, revitalizing the local economy, preserving the environment, supporting locally-grown food, and encouraging a healthier diet (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016a). While grassroots groups had initially started the Chisan-Chisho movement, it is now mainly led by the government and the JA (Kimura and Nishiyama 2008).

The Chisan-Chisho Movement in Okinawa uses a system of direct marketing of agricultural products that is roughly divided into five types of farmers' market management: (1)

set up with a roadside stall *Michi no Eki*; (2) led by the JA; (3) operated by an agricultural corporation; (4) operated by a non-profit organization; (5) set up and operated by volunteer farmers in the community (Okinawa Sōgō Jimukyoku 2017b). Yunta Ichiba[54] is a farmers' market set up by the JA in the former Yomitan Airfield to promote consumption of locally produced agricultural goods. Anyone can join in the membership of Yunta Ichiba with its annual fee of 2,000 yen (approximately $20 US). Marketable items vary from raw vegetables and fruits to processed foods, including bento lunch boxes. Producers register their name, production area, and their products. Raw vegetable and fruit producers are required to keep cultivation journals for crops to be sold at the market. Farmers record the day they plant, the day they use pesticides and the kind of pesticides applied. Occasionally JA staff members conduct an unannounced inspection on the use of agricultural chemicals. At this market, producers and sellers have decision-making authority over packaging, price setting, labeling and displaying items (see fig. 29). Meanwhile, consumers can identify producers by checking for their names on a label and see the journals upon request. In this way, consumers verify that the producers are local.

[54] The name *Yunta Ichiba* derives from an Okinawan pronunciation of Yomitan, *Yunta*, and a Japanese word for a market *Ichiba*.

Figure 29. A producer puts out grape tomatoes for sale at Yunta Ichiba. February 11, 2016. Photograph by the author.

A farmers' market, Yunta Ichiba, and an agricultural and horticultural merchandise supplier, Harusapo,[55] are Yoshitake's favorite spots in Yomitan. Yoshitake is a 70-year-old smallholding farmer. While farming has been his hobby since his youth, he made a full-fledged start in farming after retiring from an office job. His land consists of only 0.3 hectares (0.8 acres) in the west side of Yomitan on the site formerly used as the US Army's Bolo Airfield. When the land restitution was settled, the village implemented land adjustment and improvement projects for agricultural purposes, then returned it to Indigenous landowners. Yoshitake inherited his

[55] *Harusapo* is a coined word. It is a combination of the Okinawan word *harusaa* (O: a farmer) and a Japanese word *sapōto* (J: support). Harusapo is a farming supply store.

father's land and divided it up with his older brother, who is also retired and enjoys small-scale farming. Yoshitake's field is filled with various crops such as potatoes, beans, corns, tomatoes, cabbages, and other vegetables. While he changes crops depending on the season, their quality, and the soil condition, he grows twenty to twenty-five kinds of vegetables at most. He exchanges seeds and nursery plants with his brother, and shares harvested vegetables with his son's family, in-laws, and other extended family. He even uses chilled transportation and sends his vegetables out to his daughter who lives a thousand miles away. Vegetables are also kept in a freezer after harvesting for the off-season. He and his wife rarely buy vegetables from the store. Instead, he participates in selling some of his vegetables at Yunta Ichiba.

At Yunta Ichiba, cashiers calculate everything that is sold and notify producers, so producers can replenish their stock as necessary. Producers are also responsible for taking back their own unsold and outdated goods. The farmers' market silently encourages producers to make the best use of their creative efforts to sell their products by observing and communicating with other producers and consumers at the store. Some producers grow non-traditional or non-Indigenous vegetables, trying to find a market niche. Gradually this system has created competition among producers and prompted these producers to get familiar with the know-how of sales. Yoshitake said,

> Some elders put huge well-made squashes on sale for 500 yen (c. $5 US) each, and they do not come back to the market for a week. Next to their squashes, I put smaller squashes for 300 yen (c. $3 US) each. I go to the market every day to check if they are sold, and sometimes I adjust the price. While 500 yen squashes are sitting there for a week, customers buy my 300 yen squashes, and I get to bring another dozen squashes to put on sale. You need to know consumers' needs.

While Yunta Ichiba became a site of social interaction and economic activities for smallholders, members who fall behind in reading trends find a new challenge in learning about consumer demands at the farmers' market as well as competing with large-scale farmers. Because the current system of farmers' market membership does not categorize producers based on farm size, large scale farmers can sell a significant volume of their products there. Yoshitake complained,

> JA should extend their technical guidance to retired, smallholders, not only large-scale farmers. Even after retiring from office work at age 60, people keep farming until they

> are 80 years old. We can farm twenty more years. JA should extend the eligibility for guidance and subsidiary projects to smallholders as well. There are many smallholders in Okinawa.

As he points out, smallholders in rural Okinawa have been very active and enjoy working on the land. While the JA has a significant presence in agricultural activities and politics, it is villagers' engagement in farming that has contributed to village-wide social movements for demilitarization and agricultural community building. Currently, Yomitan has designated approximately 45 percent of the village space for agricultural promotion (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son 2008). Through the process of land repossession, the main reason Yomitan chose to transform the land for agricultural use was to avoid speculative land purchases. Yomitan secures the process in which the former military land is handed over to previous landowners and thus rejects the injection of external capital into the Indigenous community. As a result, Yomitan's farmscape contains numerous smallholders, who enjoy horticulture and hobby farming. Moreover, as mentioned elsewhere, *Yamaimo suubu* is held throughout *aza* communities in Yomitan and farmers compete to produce the largest yam of the year. Every fall, Yomitan Village hosts the annual Yomitan Festival. At the festival, villagers have an opportunity to display their showpieces and the Village recognizes individual work and effort to produce their masterpieces of agricultural products and cultural artifacts (see fig. 30). If we think of Chisan-Chisho (J: local production and local consumption) as an extension of the Indigenous resurgence rather than a solely government and JA-led project, the farmers' market, Yunta Ichiba, has served as an outlet for local smallholders to extend and exercise their economic activities around a community food system.

Figure 30. A villager's sweet potatoes won "the Highest Award" at Yomitan Festival. November 1, 2015. Photograph by the author.

An unintended consequence of creating a farmers' market in the community, where the local circulation of reciprocity around food had already been informally established is that marketing practices began to change peoples' relationship to the land and food. As the farmers' market created a space for subsistence-based, small-scale, hobby farmers to enter the agricultural market at a local level, it has witnessed an emerging tension in regulating the wholesale market. It has transformed Indigenous small-farmers' ways of participating in the capitalist economy and exercising individual autonomy. Instead of being subsistence foods, gifts, and offerings in the Indigenous community, agricultural products have become commodities that are sold. Meanwhile, the local space of the farmers' market instead of franchised wholesale stores, still anchors a set of entangled relationships, which cannot fully alienate farmers from their land, and

cultural practices of farming. These smallholders' everyday practices of farming and their active engagement in agrarian space-making show their commitment to maintaining access to these means of subsistence, namely the land and the community.

Furthermore, most of the smallholding farmers are retired "hobby" farmers who would rather identify themselves as *harusaa* instead of *hyakushō*. *Harusaa* is an Okinawan word, which directly translates to "field person" and refers to anyone who engages in farming, gardening and any other form of tilling soil. While having experienced salaried employment, these small-scale farmers returned to the land, and enjoy taking care of their manageable plots and crops. Farming, for them, became a chosen lifestyle rather than a livelihood. On the other hand, *hyakushō* is a Japanese word for farmers who make agriculture their occupation and connotes the meaning of "peasant." Yomitan's small farmers or *harusaa* have relied on off-farm income, which allows them to enjoy the free and spontaneous activities of farming more than full-time *hyakushō*, who make a living from farm work. How then do the so-called "*hyakushō*" who rely on agricultural work full-time think of contemporary farming practices and the related economy? In a society where youth tend to keep their distance from the primary extractive industries and the agricultural economy continues to decline, how do full-time farmers, especially young and new farmers, see their work and economic autonomy?

Commercial Farming with "a Hundred Names"

To cope with the issues of agrarian communities, the Japanese government has made legal changes. In 1999, the Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas Basic Law (J: *Shokuryō, Nōgyō, Nōson Kihonhō* 食料・農業・農村基本法) was enacted with the addition of a new policy on "corporatization of agriculture management" in Article 22 (Nōrin Suisan Shō 1999). With the aim of revitalizing the primary industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) promotes the importance of corporatization of agricultural management which includes the following: (1) Ensuring new farmers; (2) Revitalizing rural society; and (3) Successful succession of management (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Hikōjō Tenyō Suishinka 2007). Moreover, the revision of the Agricultural Land Law in 2009 relaxed the requirement for enterprise to use farmland for agricultural management. In postwar Japan, the Agricultural Land Law of 1952 had stressed ownership of farmland by the people who cultivated it and restricted the involvement of corporations in the farming sector (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016a). The revision allowed general corporations to lease farmland anywhere in Japan for up to a fifty year

maximum (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016a). Consequently, the entry of corporations into the agricultural sector has increased at five times the pace noted before the revision (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016a).

While the entry of corporations into an agrarian community could support the economy, existing farming households find it difficult to incorporate and compete with others in agribusiness. At the local level in Yomitan, many farming actors responded by showing their interest in corporatization as part of a set of measures to build up their agricultural management; however, the lack of guidance about operation and management after establishing a corporation has left farm households anxious and indecisive (Okinawa-ken Yomitan-son Hikōjō Tenyō Suishinka 2007).

The process of returning the Yomitan Airfield promised that Yomitan Village, as a landowner, would lease the farmland to five groups called farmland ownership qualified corporations (J: *nōchi syoyū tekikaku hōjin* 農地所有適格法人), organized by previous landowners together, who would improve the agricultural base. Yomitan's Advanced Agricultural Group Area promotes the production of flowers and fruits. The land repossession project subsidized facility building such as greenhouses and offered members of the five agricultural corporations technical training and advice and the use of the JA's expensive farming equipment. However, since most Indigenous landowners had been or became smallholding *harusaa* rather than full-time large-scale farming households, not all landowners were comfortable about running agricultural companies.

Moreover, based on the contract between the Village and the JA, products harvested on the Airfield are outsourced for sorting and packaging at the JA's sorting center. For example, Yomitan's top flower product, chrysanthemums, are sent to JA's sorting center after being picked in farmers' fields. JA employees select flowers with a sorting machine, put them in boxes and ship them out for sale under JA's flower brand "*Okinawa no Hana* (J: Flowers of Okinawa)." Therefore, flowers produced in the Advanced Agricultural Group Area are sold through the intermediary of the JA.

While there are benefits of working with the JA, some farmers prefer other business models. Ikehara Kōhei, 34 years old, a father of two children, runs a joint-stock company, Sunset Farm, which produces 27,000 bunches of chrysanthemums a year on its 6.6 hectares (16.33 acre) flower farm (see fig. 31). Originally, Kōhei's father started the cultivation of chrysanthemums

and is known to be one of the first generation of chrysanthemum farmers in Okinawa. Since the 1980s, chrysanthemum production has steadily increased to catch up with sugar cane production (see fig. 28). In Yomitan specifically, chrysanthemums replaced sugar cane as the major agricultural crop grown by full-time, commercial farmers. Kōhei's chrysanthemum farms are located throughout Yomitan, and most of his farmland is leasehold. About 0.4 hectares (one acre) of Kōhei's farm is in the Advanced Agricultural Group Area, and he is a member of one of the farmland ownership qualified corporations. As for flowers grown in the other farm areas, the Sunset Farm performs all the tasks from planting, nursing, harvesting, sorting, packaging, through to placing orders for shipment. "Although the feeling of responsibility is heavier because the company's name is out there," Kōhei prefers to see consumers' faces and hear their voices.

Figure 31. Chrysanthemum farm. February 25, 2016. Photograph courtesy of Sunset Farm.

In 2015, Kōhei took over his father's farmlands and established a joint-stock agricultural company. Sunset Farm currently employs fifteen full-time workers and two part-time workers aged between nineteen to sixty-five. Five out of fifteen full-time employees are women. Contrary to the common concern in the agricultural sector about the lack of new farmers, Kōhei has never worried about finding workers at his farm. His belief in friendly, family-like ties with his employees and their ability to attract more people keep his farm vibrant and growing. In 2017, Yomitan Village recognized Kōhei as an "authorized farmer" who is expected to support the future economy of the region. The Authorized Farmers System is a certification system whereby municipalities recognize plans to advance agricultural management improvements and provide support measures to certified farmers (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b). It is one of the Ministry of Agriculture's initiatives to address the "issue of people and farmlands" in each area such as aging, lack of new farmers, and a stagnant economy (Nōrin Suisan Shō 2016b). One of the government's solutions is to persuade people to consolidate their farmlands and bring them under farmland ownership qualified corporations, which can economically support the region in the future. Kōhei says,

> The reality of agriculture in Yomitan is that it is still poorly equipped and unstable. The market fluctuates, and the primary industry like agriculture gets easily affected. The situation in which producers cannot decide the price of their crops creates instability in farmer's incomes. Agricultural management seems difficult for an employer to improve employment and provide sufficient social insurance and welfare benefits for employees … It has been difficult for the youth to be ambitious and see hope in agriculture.

Kōhei's response was followed by a question. He asked me what my image of "doing farming" is and if farming as an occupation makes me worried about the stability of the lifestyle and the future. Then he continued,

> Agricultural work has been called a 3K job, which refers to *kitsui* (J: demanding)*, kitanai* (J: dirty)*,* and *kusai* (J: smelly).[56] Our mission is to change this 3K to a new 3K, referring to *kakkoii* (J: cool), *kasegu* (J: earning), and *kashikoi* (J: smart). We discuss in detail how much we would like to make in profits, how we could make farming look cool, and how we can be smart knowing about more than soil. If we self-produce as "*Hyakushō* (J: farmer)," we want to learn more about society, management, business and how to become a person whom the younger generation would want to become. A person, who makes

[56] Originally, 3K refers to *kitanai* (J: dirty), *kiken* (J: dangerous), and *kitsui* (J: demanding). In the interview, Kōhei said *kusai* (J: smelly) instead of *kiken* (J: dangerous).

> his/her way through this farm, can do farming and that means he/she can do better at everything. I want to nurture people like that, and farming is the catalyst. The processes of farming, basically from producing seed, managing soil, nursing the growth, through harvesting, that is life. We start with nothing, make efforts to produce something and harvest the result.

Kōhei, as a second-generation farmer, does not hesitate, and instead, sees the potential to make profits from being a farmer. He turns the image of "farming" from an undesirable 3K job to an attractive option (see fig. 32). The term "*Hyakushō* 百姓" is used to refer to a farmer. In Japanese, "*hyakushō*" literally means "a hundred names." The term was originally used to indicate an ordinary citizen such as a doctor, beautician, or monk, who engages in farm work part-time. The term derives from a word for people who could flexibly engage in the multiple tasks demanded by society without being restricted to one occupation. At the same time, these people knew how to bring their own food to the table. In the capitalist-driven economy of commercial agriculture, young Okinawan farmers turn the unfavorable conception of "*Hyakushō*" as "multiple masks" into means of seeking independence and autonomy, ways to stand on their own feet. What is not clearly stated but is implied here was what Kōhei called the "adversarial mindset," which rejects the total transformation of farming into a single form of labor for profit. Rather, his reclaims the flexibility and resiliency of farming practices.

Figure 32. "SUNSET FARM: New Style 3k of Farmers." May 27, 2016. At the Zakimi Castle ruin in Yomitan. Photograph courtesy of the Sunset Farm.

In 2010, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries announced the creation of industry networking to promote what they have named the "sixth" industry[57] (Nihon Nōgyō Shinbun 2016; Nōrin Suisan Shō n.d.). The Ministry created this idea of a sixth industry as a way for Japan's rural communities to take advantage of regional resources and promote domestic agricultural production through innovative networking and collaboration of the primary (agriculture, forestry, and fishing), secondary (manufacturing), and tertiary (service) industries (Nihon Nōgyō Shinbun 2016; Nōrin Suisan Shō n.d.). Kōhei confidently commented,

> In fact, movement from the secondary and tertiary industries to the primary industries has been there, especially by big companies. I think it is difficult for these companies to get into the primary industry. Producing something and having good quality products are very technical and specialized operations. However, if the primary industry approaches the sixth industrialization, I think, something interesting would happen.

[57] The idea of the "sixth" industry derives from combining the primary (1), secondary (2), and tertiary (3) industries (1+2+3=6) to diversify and expand the agricultural development network.

Kōhei is excited by how his agricultural work could enter the sixth industry and become popular and appealing. His idea of doing "*Kiku*-mination" is to attract people to Yomitan using his farms. His coined word "*Kiku*-mination" means an illumination of Yomitan's night farmscape with lights used for the cultivation of *kiku* (J: chrysanthemums).

Figure 33. Thinking of "*Kiku*-mination." Photograph courtesy of Sunset Farm.

Inasmuch as Okinawa's agricultural scene is enmeshed in the market-based economy and has become a profit-making business, commercial farmers have attempted to ensure that they participate in the ways they wish. Despite the overall decline in numbers, the presence of commercial farmers has contributed to the rural economy and to empowering young farmers by re-interpreting farming. I argue that this reconfiguration of what farming means is political and has economic repercussions on agricultural traditions and structures in Okinawa. While leading the commercial agriculture of Yomitan, flower farmers' aspirations to promote local economies by cultivating not only the land but the people open wider possibilities for what farmers can do and how autonomous they can be. Here, Indigenous farmers' agency can be understood in their continued motivation and action to take "a hundred names" while retaining their desire for success and persistence in self-sustainability.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the agricultural scene and farming practices in three scales: the village-level, smallholders, and commercial farmers. First, Yomitan's initiative of agrarian space making and rural development exemplify Indigenous attempts to re-interpret tradition as a way for the community to prioritize a localized agri-food system. The efforts resulted in success in debunking the myth of eternal economic dependence on military-related income and revealing the possibilities of alternate development from within. Second, smallholding farmers in Yomitan have participated in the Chisan-Chisho (J: local production and local consumption) movement initiated by the village and the JA. While securing space for smallholders and their participation has sustained the flow of local agro-food networks, hobby farmers or *harusaa*'s participation in the market economy has also transformed their relationship to agricultural products as more than a gift economy.

Third, commercial farmers are the ones who have struggled the most to work with, against, and in between the contemporary Japanese agricultural economy. While understanding the arduousness of agriculture, second-generation commercial farmers attempt to de-/re-construct agricultural economic activities. They openly discuss and claim alternate meanings of farming and farmers in seeking more autonomous economic activities while participating in the market economy. Drawing upon Matsumura's (2015) description of the early 1900s' Okinawan elites' "multiple masks," I argue that commercial farmers use "a hundred names" to resist the economic force which dominates them. While commercial farmers are not necessarily considered "elites" in Okinawa, they too have rejected marginalization in Japan's agricultural economy and sought ways to speak for themselves, stand on their own feet, and carry out their visions. Rather than completely renouncing participation in capitalist farming, commercial farmers have opted to work from within to operate an empowering form of farming and to be a farmer, *hyakushō*.

Indigeneity and farming spur a recurring set of questions and dilemmas. Who are Indigenous farmers? How should Indigenous farmers reconcile with capitalism? How could Indigenous land repossession envision alternative economic self-determination? What does making "agrarian space" mean for the Indigenous community? Three examples in this chapter demonstrate the lived practices of Indigenous politics that operate within the context of capitalism.

Indigenous farmers are also using the alleyways between greenhouses for informal farming. Yomitan's Advanced Agricultural Group Area brought a neat readjustment and installation of greenhouses to promote production of subtropical fruits by farming entities. While many farmers of agricultural entities grow major commercial crops such as sugar cane, flowers, and sweet potatoes at designated land areas, informal farming has also been carried out in alleys in between greenhouses (see fig. 34). Farmers use these narrow alleys for subsistence farming to grow edible crops. While having agricultural land, Indigenous farmers still dwell in an informal way and care for space through gardening. This practice can also be understood as another form of "tacit farming," in which farming practices are "tolerated" by the government's and the JA's control and planning of the space. Through their formal and informal practices, farmers express and exert diverse forms of power.

Figure 34. Farming in between greenhouses at the Yomitan's Advanced Agricultural Group Area. February 11, 2016. Photograph by the author.

In re-thinking farming and farmers in the rural community of a modern capitalist country, I hope this chapter shows the entangled roots and paths of alternative futures for this Indigenous community. We do not have to be pessimistic about agrarian development or Indigenous appropriation of capitalism; I have presented some of the hopeful intended and unintended consequences in the process of Indigenous repossession and agrarian transformation. In the next chapter, I highlight Indigenous forms of agency that operate within the contemporary context of settler militarism and capitalism in Okinawa. While paying attention to practitioners' relationships and responsibilities to the land and the people, I envision how Okinawa proceeds on its way to community-centered resurgence.

CHAPTER 6

Resurgents Create a Moral Landscape

> *All these cultural metaphors of proper behavior are activated in our minds. The way we think about and talk about this place is activated, it's changed. The landscape becomes a moral landscape.*
>
> —Enrique Salmón

When I stepped into *Wakage no itari mura* ワカゲノイタリ村 (J: the Village of Youthful Exuberance), I felt as though it was a 21st-century hippie commune. In the late afternoon of Christmas Day, about ten men and women in their twenties gathered in the Village of Youthful Exuberance. This uniquely named "village" is located near Oura Bay in Nago City, northeast Okinawa. When I entered, some villagers were chatting around a fire in the hand-made brick oven. Others were picking herbs from their garden. Inside a house, some villagers were learning how to make "effective microorganisms" from horticulturists visiting from Hong Kong. While I was a bit bewildered by the dynamic of this community, my impression completely changed when I began talking with the "mayor" of the village.

The "mayor" of the youthful village, Gushiken Hideaki, was twenty-three years old at the time of our meeting. Born and raised in Nago City, Gushiken attended Okinawa International University. Just like many other Okinawan college students, he was studying English, wishing to have international experiences in the future. "Thinking that the US military base was one of [American] culture," Gushiken worked part-time on the base for four years. While interacting with US soldiers of a similar age, who faced battlefield duty, Gushiken soon came to realize the root of the problems that Okinawa is facing. Gushiken said, "It is not that the US soldiers were evil, it is the structure, the root part of the society that is wrong." Gushiken confirmed his ideas while he traveled around Japan. The backpacking trip Gushiken intended to be preparation for traveling abroad instead showed him communities at odds with the state over a lack of support after the Tōhoku Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Disaster. Gushiken thought, "There are so many things we need to do here before I go abroad." He took a leave of absence from school and soon began to set up *Wakage no itari mura*—"a community to change the society." Gushiken found a suitable location on the northeast coast of Okinawa, presented his plan to the

community, negotiated, and was granted a space to rent in *aza* Futami area to launch his village. Gushiken passionately told me,

> After all, [we] always get wound up in tolerating the military, especially the US military, because of their approach to "conserve" the environment. The root part is that ... we, in this capitalism, consume too much, and the culture of deprivation already exists. If we want to change it, we must change the lifestyle itself. I am not saying to live frugally, but to live the life that matches with the times … So, we rent the farmland, and we grow food. We want to complete [the cycle] from production to distribution with our own brand and hammer out a new industry for the east coast. This [side] is an area that has been swayed by the issues of Henoko and Takae.[58] When the community is asked for a counterproposal, the economic situation of the community has led [people to] think that they need [the military bases]. So, we will make new counterproposals early and say, "we can do it [without the bases]." I want to undivide the community again. The worst scenario is, to lose the good culture of Okinawa because of the politics and money. I do not want that. That is how I decided to do this here on the east coast.

While facing various issues in his eclectic village, Gushiken and the villagers are eager to create an alternative form of community. In Okinawa, like other militarized places, the presence of the military is normalized within the hegemony of colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy through constant reconstructions of militarized spaces (Enloe 2007; Ferguson and Turnbull 1998; Lutz 2009). "I was frustrated about the Henoko issue because the thinking of 'nothing will change no matter what we do' is getting rooted in people's minds," Gushiken said. In fact, many of the Okinawan youth, who know Okinawa only as fenced, share the same frustration Gushiken feels. Meanwhile, their youthful exuberance has demonstrated their power to uproot the frustration and replace it with the passion for unseen possibilities. At least, *Wakage no itari mura* was already functioning as a new hub for the Okinawan youths to gather, learn about, think about, and practice how they want to create their future life on this island.

Connecting Dots...

For this dissertation research, I focused my field study mainly in Yomitan. As described in previous chapters, Yomitan tells a story of a successful locality in Okinawa that took proactive steps for community resistance and "endogenous" economic development in the process of

[58] Henoko and Takae are the places in northern Okinawa where the construction of new US military bases began in 2015 as replacements for the US Air Station Futenma in the central Okinawa. The construction has been controversial because the Japanese government pushed the plan forward whileignoring persistent local opposition.

village reconstruction (Tanji 2009, 2011). What makes Yomitan unique, compared to other municipalities like Naha, is its firm application of self-organizing peoplehood matrices and community members' strong commitment to planning and practices in making Indigenous space. In this chapter, I broaden the scope of mapping Indigenous resurgence outward and forward from Yomitan to connect individuals, and more specifically, the new generation of practitioners of Indigenous resurgence across Okinawa Island (see fig. 35).

Tracing social movements in Okinawa, Miyume Tanji (2006) argues for the internal diversity of Okinawan activism and draws attention to the myth of "the Okinawan struggle" which simplifies experiences, memories, and goals of the various local groups. Likewise, narrating Okinawan Indigeneity along postwar identity politics reduces its flexibility, diversity, and positionality within Okinawa. Because of the continuous and scattered military occupation, displacement, and resettlement of Indigenous people on Okinawa Island, the postwar reconstruction and Indigenous land repossession have followed different steps and processes in different areas. Therefore, the stories, experiences, political stances and activism used to tackle militarized Okinawa are diverse.

This dissertation explores implicit forms of decolonization activism to move a dominant discourse of Okinawan Indigeneity away from "always resisting" toward "resurging" with the power of everyday practices that build decolonial consciousness. As I have shown in the previous chapters, the everyday practices of farming by Okinawans have made their presence and results visible, and demonstrated that it is possible for native people to regain their living space. Focusing on everyday acts of resurgence and sustainable self-determination, Jeff Corntassel (2008; 2012, 88) suggests a conceptual shift of decolonization from "symbolic gestures" to "one's relational, place-based existence." In highlighting Indigenous agency, I argue that the everyday practices of farming on militarized space constitute the exercise of Indigenous rights and responsibilities to self-determination by making Okinawan presence and practices visible and sustainable. Further, these practices convey an Indigenous landscape that is full of multiple narratives, memories, and knowledge of the people linking generations from the past to the future. Farming functions as purposeful acts of Indigenizing the landscape.

In rural and suburban Okinawa, the production of Indigenous space emerges from everyday life and everyday practices of native peoples' making sense of the militarized landscape. No matter how the land was bombed, paved, or fenced, Okinawans have never

stopped engaging with the land in their own way. It is also important to note that my focus on everyday practices in the rural sites does not intend to exclude "symbolic" and organized forms of social movement in urban Okinawa, which also contribute to Indigenous movements towards "spatial decolonization" (Goeman 2013). As much as rural Okinawa contains the complexity of Indigenous geography, cities are Indigenous as well. Although the focus is not on urban Indigeneity here, urban-based articulations and Indigenous activism are also responses to dislocation and dispossession brought by colonial forces (Sissons 2005).

Expanding the scope outward from Yomitan, in this chapter, I highlight the stories of people engaged in active Indigenous resurgence, whom I have termed "resurgents." These practitioners may or may not see connections to each other. However, the affinity that emerges from their stories creates another map of Okinawa, one that moves toward spatial decolonization and draws an alternative demilitarized landscape. Mishuana Goeman (2013, 3) argues, "(re)mapping is not just about regaining that which was lost and returning to an original and pure point in history, but instead understanding the processes that have defined our current spatialities in order to sustain vibrant Native futures." This chapter connects active resurgents across Okinawa working for decolonial Indigenous futures. Most of these practitioners certainly did not identify themselves as Indigenous rights activists organized to resist colonial structures; however, their everyday acts of resurgence underpinned by their sense of mutual responsibility have slowly transformed my understanding of Okinawan Indigeneity, from an unyielding resistance to an envisioning self-determination of futures. Goeman (2013, 37) also explains, "Native stories speak to a storied land and storied peoples, connecting generations to particular locales and in a web of relationships." Stories shared by my interlocutors show they are acting beyond resistance to a power dynamic, and (re-)emerging from rooted Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. I weave these stories together to bridge the generations and scattered localities in Okinawa. It is not to homogenize Okinawan Indigeneity; instead, it is to argue that Okinawans are creating and envisioning more sustainable and inclusive space from various directions while anchoring themselves firmly on the ancestral land.

Figure 35. Map of interviewed resurgent activities in 2016.

An Invited Young Farmer

Nine months after launching, *Wakage no itari mura* (J: The Village of Youthful Exuberance) has become a space where passionate young people gather to exchange emerging concerns and new ideas in the neighborhood. One day at the youthful village, I met Ano Shōdai, a 26-year-old part-time farmer from *aza* Kayō of Nago City. Several encounters, including people's kindness and his sense of reciprocity, encouraged Ano to move into Kayō in 2016. At

the time of my first meeting with Ano in January 2017, the population of Kayō Community was only sixty-six, mostly elderly residents. Ano said, "If a man is in his 60s and still can move, he is considered of the 'young generation' here." In 2009, the Kayō Elementary School, along with three neighboring schools, merged. More than twenty houses in this small community are vacant, with only a family altar left inside. Many spaces are considered abandoned agricultural land. The young adults of the community had left and moved to cities for professional and educational opportunities. Though some come home to help with physical labor needed when traditional ceremonies are held, Kayō is one of the rural communities severely affected by the issues of aging, depopulation, and a stagnant economy.

Ano started visiting Kayō to volunteer in community events when he was a college student. As he interacted with the elders, Ano was well-received by the community, and eventually these relationships inspired him to start farming in Kayō. Ano told me about the current challenge he faces,

> [The hardest thing is] the relationship with the community and farmers when we make decisions that affect their ways of living. If I do something that ignores their ideas, even their very identity, it triggers an emotional reaction. Sometimes, things I do would divide the community into people who agree and disagree. Such human relationship is real, indeed. It is not like something that a young person, who wants to do agriculture, suddenly comes in and he can do it.

After earning a degree in agriculture, Ano now works at an agricultural cooperative entity, Okinawa Harusā Club, whose goal is achieving "sustainable and ecological agriculture" (Yanbaru Harusā Purojekuto Jimukyoku 2017). Ano's main job is to promote local agriculture and support new young farmers. While promoting organic, multi-crop farming and new farmer initiatives, the Club also supports rural revitalization (Yanbaru Harusā Purojekuto Jimukyoku 2017).

In addition to this job, Ano began rice farming on a field leased from a Kayō man. "I want to make rice that can tell traditions, cultures, and stories like ... 'In old days, Kayō was famous for rice farming…'" Ano said with smile. "With rice straw, the community used to make a rope for the tug-of-war event, but [the tradition] has not occurred for fifty years." In that time, there was nobody who farmed rice. About seven years ago, a few people in the community started rebuilding rice fields to restore the landscape of the old times. When he learned about

restoring rice fields, Ano occasionally visited the community to volunteer. As Ano passionately supported the idea, a community leader invited Ano to work on his field. Inspired by this young farmer's initiative, a few other neighboring farmers also began to work on restoring their rice fields (fig. 36).

Figure 36. An invited young farmer Ano Shōdai works to restore rice fields in Kayō. Photograph Courtesy of Ano Shōdai.

The effort to rebuild rice fields in Kayō is culturally rooted, healthy sustaining of the land, water, and people. Since rebuilding rice fields takes tremendous work, the community initiatives proceed slowly. First, waterways need restoring because the surrounding sugar cane fields —although currently abandoned— have filled the paddies. During the fifty years when rice was not farmed, sugar cane became Kayō's main cash crop to survive the capitalist agricultural economy.[59] Growing sugar cane in Kayō's unsuitably wet soil shows how capitalism negatively

[59] Due to the mountainous landscape, rice cultivation in low wetlands was encouraged and

affected the Indigenous farmscape and economic (un)development of the community. Meanwhile, creating space for rice fields encourages the transformation of lands and waters and ignites the resurgence of the sustainable Indigenous community. "Why rice? Isn't it because it was a staple food? Since farmers began to focus on growing cash crops, rice farming in Okinawa declined. That is why it ceased, and people shifted [to growing] sugar cane," Ano recounted. Although rice farming in Kayō is less competitive with larger rice production sites in mainland Japan, growing staple foods in their own fields is important for community members greatly affected by changes in the agricultural economy.

As Ano took me to his rice field and showed me around the community, I noticed that his knowledge of Kayō extends beyond just rice farming. Pointing at "the god of water," he told me a whole story of how the Kayō community emerged, how sacred spaces are maintained, why they have been important for the community, and how the community has enshrined them. At the top of the community's *utaki* [O: a sacred grove on a hill], we looked down at the village, and Ano described the landscape of Kayō (see fig. 37; also see fig. 6 in Chapter 1 and fig. 17 in Chapter 3 for images of Okinawan landscape),

> There are mountains behind, then flat fields and community, then ocean ... this was a traditional orientation of communities in Okinawa or Yanbaru.[60] This, being surrounded by mountains, is called *kusatimui*, which means 'back support hill.' [With *kusatimui*], this community is protected, according to *feng shui*.

As this young farmer learns the stories and traditional knowledge of Kayō, he fosters his feeling toward the community. Seeing the aging community through his own eyes, Ano wishes to preserve the unwritten Indigenous cosmology of the community.

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spread in northern Okinawa; however, the paddy fields have gradually decreased since the late 1990s (Ryūkyū Seifu 1989, 478).

[60] Yanbaru refers to a northern forested part of Okinawa Island. Although there is no geographical division, the term is often used to indicate the area north of Yomitan Village where Hokuzan was formed during the three-polity period in the fourteenth century.

Figure 37. Restoring rice fields in the Kayō community. Photograph courtesy of Ano Shōdai.

Seeds to Seeds

Invitations to take responsibility for a community come not only from the people but also from the land and the spirits. Kiyuna Hideaki is an owner of a *zenzai* (O: Okinawan shave ice) store at the bottom of Zakimi *jōshi* (J: Zakimi Castle ruin) in Yomitan, which is designated as a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Built in the fifteenth century by the local chief of the time, Gosamaru, Zakimi *jōshi* has been a symbolic historical piece of architecture in Yomitan. Many tourists visit the castle ruin and stop by Kiyuna's store to take a break and enjoy shave ice on a hot day. Kiyuna shared how he understands his responsibility:

My family is [genealogically] named *Niigan dunchi*,[61] a local lord. I think we benefit

[61] *Niigan dunchi* is Kiyuna's *yagoo*, traditional name of household, which often derives from geography, topography, physical or occupational distinctions. *Dunchi* refers to a local lord class of Ryukyu gentry (Okinawa Daihyakkajiten Kankō Henshūkyoku 1983).

> tremendously from Gosamaru. So I visit his grave to pay my respect. One day, I went to his grave to report about my work and the festivals and to thank him ... There was a big *fukugi* (J: garcinia) tree at the entrance. When I introduced myself, bowed, and thanked Gosamaru for making the Zakimi Castle and letting us use the space for successful events and good business, all of a sudden, the tree shook hard, and a fruit dropped in front of me ... Later I asked about it to someone who is spiritual. The person said, "The fruit dropped there and crushed, didn't it? It means you lay down roots there. He [Gosamaru] is supporting you." I still can recall the noise the tree made.

Since 2009, Kiyuna and other young leaders from Yomitan have organized an event called Zakimi Fureai Matsuri at the bottom of the Zakimi Castle ruin. The festival started from the dream that the Zakimi elders shared with Kiyuna to make a "castle town" surrounding the Zakimi Castle ruin (see fig. 38). At this festival, nearly fifty booths and food stands from local businesses line the street. While this annual event has successfully attracted many visitors, Kiyuna told me that this is only preparation for the villagers and tourists alike to imagine what a castle town would be like and gain a better understanding. He continued, "My objective is a self-sustaining economy, not like a developing economy dependent on building things. It is about how we can make full use of things we have now, how we can make this landscape more attractive."

Figure 38. A flyer for the Zakimi Fureai Matsuri.

In 2013, young entrepreneurs like Kiyuna formed the non-profit organization Ōtori-kai おおとり会 (J: the Phoenix Group), currently consisting of forty-five members of mostly Yomitan residents and settlers from Japan. Ōtori-kai works to connect the landscape, food, and people of Yomitan (Ōtori-kai n.d.). As the group promotes the sixth industry,[62] they also work on event organization, food Chisan-Chisho (J: local production and local consumption), environmental conservation and human resource development. Recently Ōtori-kai started growing *toomaami* (O: fava beans), expecting to create a new signature product from Yomitan. *Toomaami* is an aftercrop with much potential. If one plants *toomaami* before planting sweet potatoes, *toomaami* functions as a green fertilizer to help with the later growth of excellent quality sweet potatoes. Ōtori-kai also looked into *miso* made with locally grown *toomaami*. The group soon took up cultivating *toomaami* and learning how to make *miso* with *toomaami* from "mothers" of the community. Kiyuna commented, "*Toomaami miso* making has been traditionally practiced and continued in each community since the prewar period. Now *toomaami* is grown only in Yomitan ... This year was a lean year ... we need to save seeds."

The bean cultivation Ōtori-kai started for this new product development taught Kiyuna how to prepare the soil, plant seeds, be sensitive to climate, nurture the growth, patiently wait for harvesting, and continue the cycle to the next seeding period. Planting beans goes beyond just growing food and making *miso*. Without these careful and responsible acts of farming, including successful harvesting and seed planting, there will be no continuation or replication of this traditional practice. The planting of beans becomes the methodology to practice sustainable self-determination to connect seed to seed and generation to generation.

A Community Revitalization Activist

Like Kiyuna, Kinjō Takiro is a founding member of Ōtori-kai and also an owner of an Okinawa *soba*[63] restaurant in Yomitan. While Kinjō slowly expands his business throughout the island, he calls himself *chiiki okoshi katsudōka* 地域おこし活動家, an activist of community revitalization. "Empowered by the Phoenix Vision and the resurgence of Yomitan from 90

[62] See Chapter 5 for explanation of the sixth industry.
[63] Okinawa *soba* is one of the cultural foods from Okinawa. It is a type of thick wheat noodle in a soup flavored with seaweed, bonito flakes, and pork. Standard toppings include fish cake, pork belly, and pork ribs. While *soba* in Japan means buckwheat noodles, wheat is used to make Okinawa *soba* entirely.

percent military," Kinjō wishes to repay kindness and bring the vitality of the younger generation to the village. As he proclaims, Kinjō has initiated event planning to boost the development of the community with Ōtori-kai members. In a 2015 article series in the *Okinawa Taimusu*, Kinjō writes,

> "Community revitalization" began with "self-revitalization" to confirm my own existence and identity in the society. Although feelings of ambivalence and anxiety struck me many times, I kept going. Who am I? How do I live? I repeated this conversation with myself as I cooked. … By always reminding myself of "appreciation," I began to feel closer to agriculture which stands next to everyday "food." With locally produced foods such as *toomaami miso*, vast wheat fields, freshly caught fish at the Toya Harbor, this agrarian village with a heart full of dedicated local love reminded me of my identity as I live as an Okinawan.

Kinjō self-identifies as "half" Okinawan. Born to a Japanese mother and an Okinawan father, Kinjō spent about seventeen years of his youth in mainland Japan. Reflecting on his childhood and the time when he moved back to Okinawa as an adult, Kinjō thinks his life was not easy. In the 1970s, Kinjō's father played a major role in the social movement to protest the oil storage construction and landfilling on Kin Bay, the east coast of Okinawa Island. Witnessing how his father devoted much of his time in the forefront of the protest activism, Kinjō prioritizes "feeding the family" with his business rather than to being involved in social movements. Meanwhile, his experience of finding his identity as an Okinawan is represented in his Okinawa *soba*, which is served in a non-traditional style. Kinjō said, "[Being denied my *soba*] was like being denied myself ... because my mother was *naichi* [O: Japanese]. It made my ambivalent state of mind more complex."

Self-reflection and interacting with a community through *soba* making have eventually brought him to find happiness living in the community. One day, a wheat farmer in Yomitan suggested Kinjō make his Okinawa *soba* out of 100% locally grown wheat. In prewar Okinawa, similarly to rice farming, wheat cultivation was a common practice; however, it ceased and was replaced by sugar cane and other cash crops. After the war, Okinawan people made *soba* with flour brought and distributed by the US military. The basic ingredient of Okinawa's signature dish now relies highly on imported flour from the United States and Canada. While the fact of dependency on imported flour reflects the history and reality of Okinawa which entangled food security and sovereignty, Kinjō writes, "It is sad if Okinawan *soba*, the identity of Okinawan

people, is a product made abroad." Kinjō joined the Okinawa Wheat Production Co-op, which was formed in 2015. One of the objectives of the Wheat Production Co-op is to convert abandoned farmland to organic wheat fields while encouraging food security in Okinawa. Kinjō began engaging in wheat farming, making homemade *soba* noodles, and now serves Okinawa *soba* made of locally produced wheat.

In *Eating the Landscape: American Indian Stories of Food, Identity, and Resilience*, Enrique Salmón (2012) describes food as a part of our life that entails a comprehensive understanding and decolonization of ourselves. Salmón (2012, 13) writes, "The responsibility of growing food for one's community is connected to one's identity as a member of the community. This identity, this sense of 'being-ness,' is tied to the history of the people on a landscape." In Kinjō's *soba* making, his personality, strong passion, and persistent character are projected in its processes and practices. For Kinjō, making Okinawan *soba* has become a journey of his own self-realization while reflecting the history of the people and food system. Alfred and Corntassel (2005, 611) state, "The larger process of regeneration, as with the outwardly focused process of decolonization, also begins with the self." Kinjō's self-consciousness and personal re-orientation in the community bring him to renew his commitment to his place-based life and further strengthen his participation in community resurgence.

The Ōyama Taimo Fan Club

"People today don't have enough appreciation for food," Nakamura Mitsugu said in frustration. He continued, "People just make money from real estate. Then the land cost gets so high, for profits of millions of yen [for some people]. Here, farmers work so hard to make hundreds and thousands of yen. Then we get *taimo* (J: taro). That is how … and what it means to get food. It is the compensation for the hard work." Five years ago, Mitsugu and his wife Naoko, with taro farmers in Ōyama organized the "Taimo Fan Club," which focuses on activities that promote the appeal of *taanmu* (O: taro) and *taabukkwa* (O: taro patches) in Ōyama. Mitsugu and his family live in Ginowan City, an area adjacent to the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which is known as the most dangerous air station in the world due to its location in a crowded urban area (*Japanese Perspective* 2015; Tiezzi 2015). When Mitsugu and Naoko moved back from mainland Japan to his hometown with his family, they were looking for a "natural environment" where their kids could play outside. Eventually, Mitsugu found his childhood "playground" of taro patches in Ōyama, but he also saw the rapid development. Witnessing the

urban growth of his hometown encouraged Mitsugu and Naoko to start activities to convey the beauty of taro while preserving the historical taro patches.

Taro patches in Ōyama spread about forty hectares towards the west between Route 58 and the coastline. Surrounded by new buildings and roads, the presence of taro patches in an urban area seem surreal (see fig. 39). Ōyama is historically known for an abundance of water that comes from a limestone cave in Futenma. While many entrances to the limestone cave were found upland of Futenma, the actual conditions underground are not known because the Marine Corps occupies a large part of the upland area and entry is restricted. Around the taro patches, there are thirteen water sources (O: *kaa*) that were (and have been) used for domestic and agricultural purposes by farmers and residents.

Figure 39. *Taabukkwa* (O: taro patches) in Ōyama, Ginowan City.

As I, led by Mitsugu and Naoko, strolled alongside the taro patches, we came across a taro farmer named Miyagi Masaru. Masaru is a second-generation organic taro farmer. Masaru recalled, “I did not like farming because I did not want to get dirty. I had always thought this area should get filled soon.” While Masaru disliked farming when he was young, his life hit a turning point when he was in mid-thirties, and now he thinks farming is his “real vocation.” Masaru finds his calling in the idea of coexistence. He said, “[Coexistence] is the ecosystem we

had when I was using this place as a playground … coexistence with living things. I do not want to kill living organisms to make food we eat." Masaru learned how the land had weakened from repeated cultivation for profit.

Masaru, as well as Mitsugu and Naoko, believes that weakening of the land is also attributed to the increasing pressure for development that has diminished the number of taro patches. In Ōyama, there are about forty taro farmers who belong to the taro farmers' association, and many of them lease the land to grow taro. As the city carries out the land readjustment project, new buildings and roads gradually have enclosed a vast taro field. In 1968, Ginowan City adopted an urban planning ordinance on the farmland that used to be famous for taro farming (Shima 2009). The trend toward greater urbanization filled many acres of farmland and wetland in Ginowan and converted those areas to residential and commercial use. While facing enormous pressure for development, the taro farmers' association took action by lobbying the City to preserve the Ōyama taro patches. In response, in 2008, the City formulated the Basic Plan for Ōyama Taro Patch Promotion, aiming to promote urban agriculture (Shima 2009). Based on the Plan, about fifteen out of forty-nine hectares will be secured and preserved as farmland (Shima 2009). However, for the farmers, the Plan looks like merely a formality of the historic preservation of the farmscape that does not promise actual coexistence of the people with the ecosystem.

The generation shift among landowners has also shaped the city. The number of landowners at the beginning of the city planning period increased from approximately 300 to more than 600 due to the generation change and inheritance. Masaru said, "People who inherited the land do not farm. The number of landowners is increasing. No one opposes filling the patches up front, but not even ten percent of [landowners] come to the meeting to discuss this." Masaru is irritated with the "silent majority" of landowners. "In many cases, the landowners lease the land to taro farmers. So [landowners] do not understand the feelings of farmers. They are so distanced. They do not even think to preserve the taro patches," Naoko added.

In addition to the pressure for urbanization, in December 2016, PFOS (Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid), a fluorinated organic compound and pollutant coming from Futenma, was detected in high levels in the Ōyama groundwater (*Ryūkyū Shimpō* 2016). Since there was another case of finding PFOS and other toxic chemicals near Kadena Air Base in the beginning of 2016, the Okinawa Prefectural Government now inspects the Futenma Air Base for

use of the chemical substance (Mitchell 2016; *Ryūkyū Shimpō* 2016). "I think the chemicals triggered some people to quit farming," Masaru said helplessly. Although the situation remains tough for an organic taro farmer, Masaru hopes to recover the power of the land by increasing microorganisms in place of using pesticides or chemical fertilizers.

The situation also bothers Mitsugu, who works at the construction department of the city government. He says, "Civil engineering should be for people's livelihood … not to destroy trees that survived for decades in a few hours." For Mitsugu, land readjustment projects have made the land into a disposable commodity. The city and land developers constantly seek an untouched area to exploit and develop the land in a human-centered way. Mitsugu stressed, "A planned cityscape may look good, but man-made things are temporary after all." While understanding that infrastructure development creates convenience in the city, Mitsugu strongly wishes for land use that draws on the original landscape.

The Ōyama Taimo Fan Club, although it started small, has slowly worked to revive the landscape and the ecosystem that can still be found in taro patches. In 2015, Ginowan City set February 6th as a day for *taanmu* (O: taro), promising to highlight taro as a traditional vegetable and signature product of Ginowan. The city encourages citizens' *taanmu* production and consumption. Through the promotion of *taanmu*, the Club hopes citizens will realize the beauty of taro patches, the importance of a recycling-oriented ecosystem, and the interconnected land and resource system in their living environment. In Ōyama, the resurgence of an Indigenous landscape through *taanmu* has just begun.

A Landscape Designer

"I am *yaadui*[64] of Tamagusuku," Inafuku started off by saying when he greeted me. Inafuku is sixty-three years old, and an owner of popular café and lodging facilities in Tamagusuku. After leaving his profession as a civil engineering consultant, Inafuku opened his first café at a beachfront in southern Okinawa in 1995. Located in an "obscure area," his style of land use and the café did not receive positive reactions from the local community in the beginning. Inafuku calls himself a "landscape designer." He says, "I am not a land developer. I

[64] *Yaadui* means "A rural settlement for the gentry" (Sakihara 2006). *Yaadui* refers to a community formed by the upper class who lost their jobs and moved to rural areas in the early eighteenth century after the annexation of the Ryukyu Kingdom (Okinawa Dihyakkajiten Kankō Henshūkyoku 1983).

measure charms of the rough from various perspectives and polish the land. People see the refined land. People, who resonate with my style join in, then [my project] becomes one for the community." His café and other facilities make full use of the natural landscape and create eco-friendly space where visitors enjoy the stunning scenery of the ocean and gardens. While some may have opposed Inafuku's unconventional approach to land use, his passion and dream eventually gained understanding from residents. His landscape designing has brought more collaborators and expanded, and it is now called "*Sachibaru no Niwa*" (O/J: The Happy Garden). "Although half of them, who were moved [by my project] to take actions, are Japanese," he said with a complex look on his face while he told me, in the mixed use of Japanese and Okinawan, about how he had worked for ecological space-making in Tamagusuku.

Tamagusuku in southern Okinawa, which was merged with other towns to become Nanjo City in 2006, faces a different kind of landscape transformation from that of central and northern Okinawa. While land use and communities in central and northern Okinawa have largely been affected by the US military occupation, the absence and distance from the army forces in southern Okinawa has left an idyllic and quiet landscape that attracts increasing numbers of tourists and settlers from mainland Japan. In fact, half of Inafuku's employees and collaborators are Japanese settlers who were lured by the beauty of rural Okinawa. People in accord with his style of land use, moved in, bringing more like-minded people in, and a new community began to form. Due to the distance, the US military occupation is not an immediate concern for communities in southern Okinawa. Instead, slight tensions and friction between Okinawans and Japanese settlers seem to have emerged from complacency and insensitivity toward the history of the place and the people and might have displaced the centrality of Indigenous agency while (re)producing settler colonial structures. Inafuku is keenly aware of these tensions and friction between *Uchinaanchu* (O: Okinawan) and *Yamatonchu* (O: Japanese) that arise from working together to create "coexisting" community space. Inafuku said,

> *Sorette betusni kini shinakereba kini shinaide, betsuni dokono basho, dokodemo mondai arukedo, kinisuruto, nuunchi Uchinaa deemunnu, attaa shudōde matsurisanee narangayaa. Nuunchi umankai Uchinaanchuya kuunaigaya tte. Sokono mizotte meni mienaikedo ittai nuuyagayaa tte nowa mondai teiki shitara magii mondai yanbaate.*
>
> If you do not care, you do not need to care. There are problems anywhere you go. But if you care … how do I say ... This is Okinawa's land. Why can't we, Okinawans, encourage [ourselves] to take the lead to enhance the land [and welcome those who

> resonate]? What is this invisible gap [lies between Okinawans and Japanese]? If I raise this as a question, it is a big question, you know.[65]

Inafuku avoided articulating or drawing a clear line between Okinawans and Japanese because "it will be called 'reverse discrimination.'" In Okinawa, "reverse discrimination" has been used to refer to situations when Okinawans differentiate themselves from Japanese settlers and claim a native relationship to the land. This is because in Okinawa, Japanese settlers are a numerical minority and both groups are the same citizens and residents of Okinawa Prefecture. Being a numerical minority helps Japanese settlers to claim to be victims of discrimination by Okinawans.

Ignorance of the history of the place and the people and inattention to settler positionality allows settlers to disregard Indigenous relationships to the land in the process of what Wolfe calls the "logic of elimination" (Lloyd and Wolfe 2016; Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2011). It also increases the risk of further undermining Okinawan will for self-determination. The faces of a couple of Japanese settlers came to my mind as I wrote this. In fact, these Japanese settlers were the ones who introduced and connected me with some of my research participants. These settlers escaped from the busyness of urban life and moved to the culturally and ecologically beautiful and attractive island. The settlers I conversed with were humble about the everyday politics they are learning about, and were respectful about Okinawa self-determination. They too, as settlers, were questioning their own positionalities and responsibilities and exploring ways to coexist in Okinawa peacefully. After all, frictions do not necessarily stem out of the differences among people but out of different understanding of Indigenous space and place.

While Inafuku is sensitive to talk about "the absolute root" of friction, which lies in the power imbalance between Japan and Okinawa, he strongly wishes initiatives and leadership to be taken by Okinawans for land planning. Homogenized, manualized, and state-centered urban planning and real estate dealings based on productivity are no longer appealing for him. Inafuku believes that a unique economic system of Okinawa is not competition, which he described as an "adverse effect" of capitalism rooted in *naichi* (O: mainland Japan), but coexistence. As his narrative implies, the growing discussions about environmental conservation and food safety in

[65] Translation here is not done literally. The author refers to a previous conversation in the interview and has paraphrased it in the translation. Also, the interviewee uses a mixture of Japanese and Okinawan.

Okinawa have not yet reached the point of critically questioning the agency over green spaces. Rather, they have created a structure for who should and can participate in ecological space making in Okinawa. Thus, the power and privilege that settlers intentionally or unintentionally bring into Indigenous space has become obscured. Instead, some Okinawans are left feeling uncomfortable and insecure about articulating what they believe in and how they wish to proceed with the land.

I asked Inafuku if he likes his current lifestyle. He replied to me in a half serious and half humorous tone:

> When I was working in Naha, I was lying to myself. I do not do that now. So, I prefer being here. Why? This place taught me the natural way of living. The trees, the ocean, and the fish. I clearly learned how people live according to the lunar rhythm. Fish and trees taught me … I knew it when I was little. Why do *suku* (O: Mottled spinefoot, a fish) come to the beach only on the first of June, July, and August of the lunar calendar? How do they know the first day of the lunar calendar? They must have studied in a university! Their professor must have told them to go to the shore on June 1st of the lunar calendar. And, fishermen knew it from the old days. There is no question there … and so do crabs! Crabs go to the beach on the full moon night, the 15th of May to September [of the lunar calendar] from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. when the tide is high. They go to the beach to lay eggs. How do they know? … When I was working in Naha wearing a tie, I acquired skills to live like in Tokyo … You go to mind seminars and learn Japanese language intonation. You must copy the Tokyo way of sneezing to become Japanese … After I came back to [Tamagusku, although] I knew it when I was little, [I learned] the depth of nature. A human being is not in a special status among animals, plants and all living creatures. In our mind, there is a sensor like fish and crabs. When there was no electricity like fifty years ago, my parents' generation, the sensor was working and shining. They knew when a typhoon would come by feeling the wind, without checking the weather forecast. They knew when to plant seeds by looking at the moon. There was no question. It was nothing special. It was part of their life cycle … When I started working in the city, my sensor got very rusted. However, after I come back, I feel like the rust fell off a bit.

Inafuku's passion pervades his landscape design. He said with a pleased look, "If you are an owner of a café, it's a café. For me, the café was just my way of seeding." Inafuku also started wheat farming and became a member of the Okinawa Wheat Production Co-op. The group strictly prescribes their commitment to organic, non-chemical and non-pesticide wheat farming. As soon as he ensures a stable supply of his organic wheat, he intends to make the homemade pizzas offered in his café out of his wheat. Indigenous narratives of connecting food, culture, language, landscape, traditional knowledge, biodiversity, spirituality, and others remind us how

colonialism has impacted on every aspect of Indigenous life (Salmón 2012). Inafuku said confidently, "If you know what you are doing, you do not need to say. You do not need to belong to environmental organizations. You do not need to advocate. You do not need to argue. You do not fight … nature tells you. And, you have pride in your way of life … I am not an environmental conservationist, but I love nature."

Conclusion: "The landscape becomes a moral landscape"

In Okinawa and elsewhere, the language of environmentalism overwhelms Indigenous resurgence and fails to acknowledge everyday practices that thread seemingly compartmentalized aspects of Indigenous well-being together. Likewise, growing consciousness about food security among consumers focuses on having justice in the food supply but conceals how food producers understand the space and the land-based practices. My interlocutors' forms of growing food stand aligned with the agro-ecological movement to create a new paradigm to approach a more sustainable and inclusive food system. However, their approach to food is not limited to gaining rights to control the food system or farming environment. Here, food functions as metaphor for the resurgence of Indigenous livelihood. My research participants actively engage in growing food. As food producers in various ways, the set of everyday practices they engage in leads to thinking and talking about the place we live in.

My ethnographic research targeted the narratives of small-scale farmers in rural Okinawa. My observation from talking with them is that all of them cherish Indigenous epistemology and ontology while practicing farming. Farming for them is not only about producing food. They farm because of their connection to the land, their reciprocity and responsibility to the ancestors and the community, and their desire to articulate their moral landscape to future generations. Stories of the landscape and farmscape underscore the Native relationship to the land and serve as the backbone of these farmers' committed practices.

Through farming and food production, these practitioners plant the seeds for indigenizing the landscape. "Indigenizing means 'repurposing,'" Kamuela (Kamu) Enos (2017), Hawaiian community activist and Social Enterprise Director at MA'O Organic Farms in Hawai'i explains. Kamu practices and commits to the community-based social enterprise through organic farming. He stresses that indigenizing means to fulfill one's ancestral responsibility (Enos 2017). I, too, argue that what I have heard, observed and interpreted from these practitioners in Okinawa are acts of repurposing the existing structures to be vehicles for ancestral principles. They think

carefully about what and how their ancestral practices offer and how they are offered, and they explore various ways to indigenize the space and to reconnect with the community.

This chapter has sought to provide personal narratives that highlight Indigenous agency. Cultural and personal narratives by each resurgent provide immanent and underlying reasoning that assists in interpreting certain phenomena. Rooted in different locations in Okinawa, the scope of each resurgent's practices does not always reach out or work in collaboration with each other. Each of them has their own objectives, methods, and goals. What these resurgents have in common is that they choose to grow food. As these resurgents find themselves working with the people, the environment and the system, they came to realize disconnections in their lifestyle and communities. Growing food has emerged as an alternative way to acknowledge land-based knowledge and the experiences of people on the ground and to create a new paradigm to tackle the issues of controlling and accessing shared resources and fundamental aspects of human life in their surroundings. In other words, farming and food production have become their methods to practice self-determination through an agro-ecological lifestyle. Such practices of self-determination decenter the state or "politics." Rather, they focus on the land and its self-generating capacity for the future. Moreover, in their narratives and practices, they re-discover and re-connect Indigenous food, culture, knowledge, spirituality and other aspects of Indigenous life that were submerged in militarized and capitalized landscapes.

CONCLUSION

"Sea Glass Beach is my favorite beach in Okinawa, have you been there?" a US Marine Corps officer asked as he shared his excitement about the natural beauty he enjoyed during his leisure time while stationed in Okinawa. "Sea Glass Beach…?" I tilted my head in confusion and searched for the place on Google Maps. The beach is located just around the corner from Henoko, the coast where the new US military base is under construction. I did another quick web search on my iPhone. Sea Glass Beach is known by that name because of the many pieces of glass mixed with the sand, shells, and coral covering the shoreline. The next day, I was in a city library and looked through an ethno-historiographic compilation on Henoko-shi. Sure enough, I learned that the place was locally known as "*Kujindaa*," which derives from an Indigenous settlement, an *aza* called Kushi. While I could easily imagine how beautiful Sea Glass Beach might be, I could not help but wonder how much more Indigenous knowledge of this landscape has been covered over with sea glass and claimed by the settler military.

The encroachment of settler militarism is apparently still ongoing in plain sight in northern Okinawa. The forceful acquisition of land (and sea) justified by militarist narratives conceals the Indigenous presence as it replaces Indigenous cartography with names that have no reference to the Native storied landscape. However, our stories are still there. Our Indigenous knowledge surges and resurges against the colonial power's efforts to undermine it. This dissertation examined various ways in which Okinawans have understood and responded to militarization to meet their political, economic, cultural, and spiritual needs, while maintaining their connection to Indigenous space. I highlighted everyday narratives and farming practices by Okinawans that not only challenge the structure of settler militarism imposed by Japan and the United States, but also renew and resurge their ontological relationships and responsibilities to the land.

In this chapter, I sum up the main arguments by revisiting four major findings from the research and reviewing the purposes and goals of this study. One is to bring ancestral stories to the forefront, and highlight elders, who have not only long resisted the hegemony of settler militarism, but also exerted and practiced their commitments to take responsibility for the land. This dissertation will inform others about the persistent presence and resurgence of our knowledge and actions in Okinawa. This work also helps to record the variety of Indigenous

acts, and to encourage and empower the birth of resurgents. While I aim to reach and invite a broader range of readers to discover the rich culture, stories, and maps of Okinawa, a main goal is to serve as a guide for the younger generation of *Uchinaanchu*, who are eager to learn English, Western philosophies, international relations, and GIS mapping skills. Our grounded stories are as rich, informative, and invulnerable as our ancestors who have survived through the violent encroachment of settler militarism. The grounded narratives I found in the course of my research attest to the resurgence and hopeful envisioning of demilitarized Indigenous futures by Okinawans.

A resurgence of Indigenous space in Okinawa is a bottom-up effort of people to survive, coexist, and regenerate within a specific environment. Nebolon's concept of "settler militarism" helps us to understand how Japanese and American colonial land acquisitions during wartime and long afterward displaced and disrupted the elements of Indigenous peoplehood in Okinawa. In rural Okinawa, place-based understandings of belonging have historically encompassed group identities that represented self-governing communities. The military occupation of more than seventy years, which overlaid Indigenous settlements in Okinawa, unraveled the original cultural sense of belonging, rights, and responsibilities for the living space. It also required the dynamic processes of shifting spatial scales of identities. Examining the emergence of Indigenous space in Okinawa with the concept of peoplehood is different from using other categories of analysis because it "transcend[s] the notions of statehood, nationalism, gender, ethnicity, and sectarian membership" (Holm, Pearson, and Chavis 2003, 11). For example, the Yomitan Airfield dispute and repossession of the military land by villagers show that understandings of belonging were transformed not only in relation to the US military but also in regard to the land and the state. For Yomitan villagers, Indigeneity became relevant and necessary for breaking away from the undesirable use of space by the US military and land appropriation by the Japanese state. Such Indigenous repossession of land is not confined to ideologies of Ryukyuan/Okinawan nationalism nor independence. It is a place-based process of making space for "self-governance, decentralization, participation, democracy, and peace" (Yamauchi 2014, 111). The loss of land ownership, uprooting, and rerooting of Okinawan villagers' sense of belonging, and their ethic of never-ending responsibility to the land highlight the effects of settler militarism and contribute to the complexity of their sense of power, and identity. This complexity has arisen and fostered itself through everyday interactions between native Okinawans and unwelcome occupiers.

Tacit farming sites are spaces where the military has encroached but was and is challenged by Okinawan ways of knowing and being in the place. Everyday practices of farming on militarized land, i.e., tacit farming, comprise an Indigenous resurgence. While war and military occupation disrupted Indigenous lifeways, Okinawan villagers survived and revived through tilling soil and growing food. Farming was the primary economic activity and means of postwar survival by native Okinawans. Seventy-three years after the Battle of Okinawa, the continuity of farming practices on military land reveals Okinawans' will to claim their Indigenous presence and ground their ontological connection to the ancestral world. Okinawans' practices of tacit farming are not limited to growing their own food. Tacit farmers also take care of common natural resources once shared by the community, mark sacred sites to worship ancestral remains, agricultural gods, and water sources, and tell stories of the community and Indigenous landscape. Despite multiple forces of displacement, tacit farmers have maintained their connection to the land, which encompasses and exceeds understanding the land as a natural economic resource or even territorial property. Tacit farming is a political statement that makes Okinawan presence and practices visible and sustainable. Moreover, it is exemplary of the active ways of Indigenous life that Okinawans continually remember, retain, rearticulate, and reconnect communities with the past, with the ancestors, and with the place-based cosmography.

Everyday practices of farming on militarized land manifest the intermeshed elements of the peoplehood matrix: sacred history, the ceremonial cycle, language, and place in the Okinawan sense of identity and behavior (Holm, Pearson, and Chavis 2003). Tacit farming practices and knowledge of tacit farmers underpinned by the peoplehood model speaks to what Glen Coulthard (2014, 172) calls "grounded normativity" that is "antithetical to capitalist accumulation." While seeing land only as an economic resource limits Indigenous advocacy and relationships, Holm et al.'s peoplehood matrix does not include discussions of the economic activities of Indigenous communities. However, future economic development is a puzzle that many Indigenous communities including Okinawans have to face. One of the lessons of my research is that finding alternatives in Indigenous political-economic spheres starts with dismantling the limitations and exploitations created by settler militarism and prolonged colonialism. Everyday practices of farming in rural Okinawa within a modern capitalist market seek to revalue Indigeneity, opposing the representations of Indigeneity in Okinawa referencing primitive, uneducated, poor peasants. Despite the successful Indigenous repossession of the land,

the challenge of exercising both economic success and political self-determination distress and create dilemmas for Okinawan farmers. While Okinawan agricultural actors have worked with, against, and in between the existing political system and market-based agricultural economy, they consciously prioritize and secure controllable forms of land use and make their own decisions about their economic practices. The cultural aspect of the Indigenous economy through practices of subsistence farming and reciprocity remain in smallholders' participation in local agro-food networks and community-driven resurgence. In the meantime, community-based agriculture has the potential to change negative representations of Okinawan Indigeneity and rural peasantry. With their demonstrated ability to use of the land as an important source of an Indigenous cultural and economic system, the alternative, localized, small producers have emerged to overcome the development challenges of capitalist agriculture.

My interest in Indigenous languages reflects my approach to "intellectual engagement" (Silva 2017) and challenges essentializing Indigenous Okinawa into a single body. Prolonged colonialism and settler militarism have endangered Okinawan languages. As the number of native speakers decreases, grassroots movements of Indigenous language revitalization have sprung up. Many of my research participants do not speak an Indigenous language, *shimakutuba* as their first language. Neither do I. Only elderly interviewees use *shimakutuba* on a daily basis. Some of them have experienced being punished or made to feel ashamed of speaking their *shimakutuba* at school. All of my Okinawan interviewees were educated in the Japanese language, and they learned and became familiar with *shimakutuba* mostly through communication with their parents, grandparents, and community elders. The word *shimakutuba* translates to languages of *shima* (O: community), which are comprised of the diverse dialects found throughout the islands. The everyday use of Indigenous languages (*shimakutuba*) by Okinawans offers opportunities for ways of thinking through and deconstructing the limited stories in settler militaristic education and discourses that traumatize native land and body to this day. *Shimakutuba* reconnect and reconstruct our ancestors' epistemologies. I have argued that a set of practices Okinawans engaged in the use of *shimakutuba* is a form of "spatial decolonization" (Goeman 2013, 4) to re-narrate bombed and fenced landscapes and instead to authorize Indigenous longing and belonging to the land. Indigenous languages convey place-based worldviews. In other words, Indigenous space is not only about who owns the land, who is entitled to it, and who can be defined as *the* Indigenous people. There are different modes of

engagement with the land. Stories narrated in *shimakutuba* unveil Okinawan belonging to and understanding of their living space and destabilize the power settler military projects brought into these Native spaces and bodies. For Okinawans, revitalizing *shimakutuba* is an important step not only to reconnect with our ancestors but also to imagine new demilitarized landscapes.

The elementary school I attended shared a barbed-wire fence with the US Army Torii Station. As a pupil playing at the school grounds, I remember that we waved across the fence at Americans every time they passed. On our school excursions, I recall that we had to make a two-hour long detour in order to visit the sacred sites of the community and Torii Beach. It would probably take only thirty minutes for this trip if there was no fence. At home, my grandfather often invited his colleagues at the US Naval Facility White Beach to attend family functions and shared laughs as he communicated in his broken English. Another time, escorted by my base-employee grandfather, our family visited "our land," which had disappeared across the barbed-wire fence of the US Air Force's Kadena Air Base. Next to my grandfather, my grandmother would murmur something about the land, inheritance, and graveyard in her *shimakutuba*. Even in the shadow of a distant memory of my childhood in Okinawa, the presence of the military was normalized, and yet layered with Okinawan longing and telling of native space. How do we, who only knew the fenced landscape, imagine and actualize demilitarized futures of Okinawa?

In highlighting Indigenous agency, the examination of everyday practices shifted Okinawan Indigeneity from "always resisting the powerful" to "envisioning desirable futures." Making Indigenous space and farming on militarized land constitute the exercise of Indigenous rights and responsibilities to self-determination by making Okinawan presence and practices visible and sustainable. These are Okinawan counterapproaches to settler militarism which continues to separate, displace, and eliminate Indigenous lifeways. These practices are not the only manifestation of their resistance against the powerful. They resurge from the ground and convey an Indigenous landscape which is full of multiple narratives, memories, and knowledge of the people and the island. Farming for them is not only about producing food. They farm because of their connection to the land, their reciprocity and responsibility to the ancestors and the community, and their desire to articulate their indigenous landscape to future generations. Thus, farming functions as purposeful acts of Indigenizing the landscape. By tilling the soil and growing food, Indigenous resurgents add a moral layer to the Okinawa landscape.

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